

**PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA
MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH**

**MENTOURI UNIVERSITY – CONSTANTINE
FACULTY OF LETTERS AND LANGUAGES**

DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES

**DEVELOPING THE WRITING SKILL THROUGH INCREASING
LEARNERS' AWARENESS OF THE WRITING PROCESS
THE CASE OF SECOND YEAR STUDENTS - UNIVERSITY OF
CONSTANTINE**

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment for the requirements of the Master of
Arts Degree in Language Sciences.

Presented by:

Mr. Mokhtar HAMADOUCHE

Supervised by:

Prof. Ahmed MOUMENE

Board of Examiners

President: Prof. Hacene SAADI

Prof. Mentouri University - Constantine

Supervisor: Prof. Ahmed MOUMENE

Prof. Mentouri University - Constantine

DEDICATION

To the most precious people to my heart; to the ones who gave birth and meaning to my life, to the persons who gave me strength and hope:

To my dear mother and beloved father I dedicate this work.

To my brothers and sisters

To all my family and friends

To all those who prayed for me and besought God to help me

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This dissertation could not have been completed without the help of my teacher and supervisor Professor Ahmed Moumene to whom I would express my sincere thanks. I am grateful for his encouragement, kindness, patience and insightful advice throughout the completion of this work.

In addition, I am thankful to my teachers at the department of English, namely Miss Babaa, Mr. Azil, Dr. Hamada, Dr. Labed and Dr. Nemouchi for their invaluable help and support.

I am utterly grateful to the examining member of the jury, Professor Hacene Saadi for reading this work at a particularly difficult time of the year and for his priceless comments and observations that will surely help me enormously to polish this work.

I am likewise immensely grateful to all those who have taught and trained me at Mentouri University.

I would like to give special thanks to my friends and mates who encouraged and helped me.

I will not forget, of course, to express my gratitude to all the teachers and students who filled in the questionnaires.

ABSTRACT

Writing in a foreign language is one of the most challenging and complex tasks for language learners. It is a difficult skill that requires considerable effort and practice on the learners' part to reach an acceptable level of writing. Due to the complexity of this skill, many students find it very difficult to produce an adequate piece of writing. In this research work, we aim to make our students aware about the fact that the development of the writing skill involves dealing with writing as a process that entails different stages and not as a product of accurate use of grammar and vocabulary. Students should be made aware of the writing process through the intensive practice of writing which leads to the effective use of the writing techniques that allow them to decide about what to write, how to write, and how to evaluate what they write. Thus, making students aware of the different processes of writing will help them to overcome the difficulties they face when they write and to produce well written texts. It is by the means of two questionnaires devised to both teachers and students from the Department of Languages at Mentouri University-Constantine that we investigated our hypothesis. The findings gathered in this study confirmed the set hypothesis in that the problems students face in writing can be avoided, and effective production can be achieved if they are made aware of the importance of the writing process and the stages it entails.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- EFL:** English as a Foreign language
- ESL:** English as a Second Language
- FL:** Foreign Language
- L1:** First Language/Mother Tongue
- L2:** Second Language
- N:** Number of Teachers/Students

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1: A Sequence of Ideas. Murray and Hughes.....	12
Figure 1.2: Model Based Approach. White.....	20
Figure 2.1: Process of Writing. Harmer.....	25
Figure 2.2: Process Wheel. Harmer.....	25
Figure 3.1: Years of Teaching English.....	38
Figure 3.2: Years of Teaching “Written Expression”.....	39
Figure 3.3: Teachers Opinions about the Time Given to Writing.....	40
Figure 4.4: “Written Expression” Programme Sufficiency in Improving Writing.....	41
Figure 3.5: Approaches Used by Teachers in Writing.....	42
Figure 3.6: The Most Difficult Stage for Students in the Writing Process.....	44
Figure 3.7: Teachers Helping Students When they Write.....	46
Figure 3.8: The Importance of Awareness about the Process in Writing.....	47
Figure 3.9: Proceeding through the Writing Steps for Better Compositions.....	48
Figure 3.10: Teachers Asking Students to Proceed Through All the Writing Steps.....	49
Figure 3.11: Students Following All the Writing Steps.....	50
Figure 3.12: Students Attitudes towards the Module of “Written Expression”.....	56
Figure 3.13: Students’ Opinions about the Time Given to “Written Expression”.....	57
Figure 3.14: What Students Do after Reading the Topic they are Supposed to Write about.....	59
Figure 3.15: The Most Difficult Step in the Writing Process.....	61
Figure 3.16: What Students do when they Write?.....	62
Figure 3.17: Students Awareness about the Writing Process.....	63
Figure 3.18: Students’ Proceeding through all the Writing Steps.....	65
Figure 3.19: Following the Writing Steps for Better Compositions.....	66
Figure 3.20: Teachers Asking Students to Follow the Writing Steps.....	67

LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1: Years of Teaching English.....	38
Table 3.2: Years of Teaching “Written Expression”.....	39
Table 3.3: Teachers Opinions about the Time Given to Writing.....	40
Table 3.4: “Written Expression” Programme Sufficiency in Improving Writing	41
Table 3.5: Approaches Used by Teachers in Writing.....	42
Table 3.6: The Most Difficult Stage for Students in the Writing Process.....	44
Table 3.7: Teachers Helping Students When they Write.....	45
Table 3.8: Aspects Teachers Help Students Editing.....	46
Table 3.9: The Importance of Awareness about the Process in Writing.....	47
Table 3.10: Proceeding through the Writing Steps for Better Compositions.....	48
Table 3.11: Teachers Asking Students to Proceed Through All the Writing Steps.....	49
Table 3.12: Students Following All the Writing Steps.....	50
Table 3.13: Stages Students Proceed Through.....	51
Table 3.14: Students Attitudes towards the Module of “Written Expression”.....	56
Table 3.15: Students’ Opinions about the Time Given to “Written Expression”.....	57
Table 3.16: What Students Do after Reading the Topic they are Supposed to Write about.....	59
Table 3.17: Most Important Components in Writing.....	60
Table 3.18: The Most Difficult Step in the Writing Process.....	60
Table 3.19: Changes Students make when Re-reading.....	61
Table 3.20: What Students do when they Write?.....	62
Table 3.21: Students Awareness about the Writing Process.....	63
Table 3.22: Students’ Familiarity with the Writing Stages.....	64
Table 3.23: Students’ Proceeding through all the Writing Steps.....	65
Table 3.24: Following the Writing Steps for Better Compositions.....	66
Table 3.25: Teachers Asking Students to Follow the Writing Steps.....	67

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION:	01
Introduction.....	02
1. Statement of the Problem.....	02
2. Aim of the Study.....	03
3. Research Questions and Hypothesis.....	03
4. Tools of Research.....	04
5. Structure of the Study.....	05
CHAPETR ONE: THE WRITING SKILL	06
Introduction.....	07
1.1. Nature of Writing.....	07
1.2. Reasons for Teaching Writing.....	09
1.3. Effective Writing.....	09
1.3.1- Organization.....	10
1.3.2- Clarity.....	11
1.3.3- Coherence.....	12
1.3.4- Word Choice.....	13
1.3.5- Mechanics.....	13
1.4. Writing and Other Language Skills.....	14
1.4.1- Four Language Skills Working Together.....	14
1.4.2- Writing and Speaking.....	15
1.4.3- Writing and Reading.....	16
1.5. Approaches to Teaching Writing.....	18

1.5.1- The Controlled-to-Free Approach.....	18
1.5.2- The Free-Writing Approach.....	19
1.5.3- The Product-Oriented Approach.....	20
1.5.4- The Process-Oriented Approach.....	20
1.5.5- The Genre Approach.....	21
Conclusion.....	22
CHAPTER TWO: THE PROCESS APPROACH AS AWARENESS RAISING.....	23
Introduction.....	24
2.1. The Writing Process.....	24
2.2. The Process Approach.....	26
2.3. Models of the Writing Process.....	27
2.3.1- The Flower and Hayes Model.....	27
2.3.2- The Bereiter and Scardamalia Model.....	28
2.4. Stages of the Writing Process.....	29
2.4.1- Prewriting.....	29
2.4.2- Drafting.....	30
2.4.3- Reviewing.....	31
2.4.4- Editing.....	32
2.5. Awareness.....	33
2.5.1- Awareness Defined.....	33
2.5.2- Types of Language Awareness.....	33
2.5.3- Awareness Raising.....	34
Conclusion	35

CHAPTER THREE: DEVELOPING THE WRITING SKILL THROUGH INCREASING AWARENESS OF THE WRITING PROCESS	36
3.1. The Teachers Questionnaire.....	36
Introduction.....	37
3.1.1. Administration of the Questionnaire.....	37
3.1.2. Description of the Questionnaire.....	37
3.1.3. Analysis of the Questionnaire.....	38
3.2.4. Discussion of the Results of the Questionnaire.....	51
Conclusion.....	52
3.2. The Students Questionnaire.....	54
Introduction.....	55
3.2.1. Administration of the Questionnaire.....	55
3.2.2. Description of the Questionnaire.....	55
3.2.3. Analysis of the Questionnaire.....	56
3.2.4. Discussion of the Results of the Questionnaire.....	67
Conclusion	68
CONCLUSION	70
REFERENCES	73
APPENDICES	79

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Introduction	02
1. Statement of the Problem	02
2. Aim of the Study	03
3. Research Questions and Hypothesis	03
4. Tools of Research	04
5. Structure of the Study	05

Introduction

Writing in a foreign language is one of the most challenging skills for almost all learners. Developing the writing skill is thought to be highly complex if not the most complex in comparison to listening, speaking and reading. What makes writing a very troublesome task for EFL learners is the fact that it requires some criteria of acceptability relative to different aspects of writing which include content, organization, vocabulary, language use, spelling, punctuation and accurate capitalization and paragraphing.

In addition to the former criteria of acceptability, and in order to make an acceptable piece of writing, learners should pass through different stages of writing that enable them to proceed from the blank sheet of paper to the final version of writing. This progression is widely known as “process”. Probably, the model of writing is commonly known by EFL learners as the original planning-writing-reviewing framework.

During planning, for example, learners need to be able to generate, organize and adapt information to the specificities of a given task activities. The drafting stage as another example is the ‘physical act of writing’; it is when the writer actually writes following the flow of his ideas. And as a third example, the revising stage which is the stage during which writers correct mechanical errors and realize substantial changes in their writing.

1. Statement of the Problem

Due to the complexity of the writing skill, a great majority of FL learners find it difficult to master all the mechanics of writing and to use them appropriately; therefore they do not produce acceptable compositions. One of the factors that seems to be obstructing learners from achieving good performance in writing is that they neglect the process in which writing should be carried out. Classroom observation and interviewing allowed us to say that most of the learners when writing about a certain topic, allow very little time to planning and tend to

be more occupied with mechanics, particularly spelling, instead of organization and arrangement which they seem to consider of secondary importance, if they consider it at all.

The question is that many learners seem to achieve well when it comes to producing short sentences and paragraphs; but when it comes to writing compositions, they make too many mistakes and erroneous forms. Learners lose their ability to write short and correct sentences, they tend to say everything at a time. They seem to ignore their knowledge about the techniques of writing, especially planning and revising; the longer their sentences are, the more mistakes they contain, and less meaning is clearly expressed.

2. Aim of the Study

Since many learners have difficulties to manage writing coherently and accurately in the target language, it is our belief that the mastery of writing requires an understanding of how the writing process works, by emphasizing not only the product, but also the different stages the learner goes through as a process.

In this dissertation, we aim to make our students aware of the development of the writing skill and the stages it involves as a process not as a product of accurate use of grammar, syntax and vocabulary. They should be made aware through intensive practice of writing which leads further to the effective use of the writing techniques that allow them to decide about what to write, how to write, and how to evaluate what they have written. Thus, making students aware of the different processes of writing will help them to overcome the difficulties they face when they write, and therefore produce well written-texts.

3. Research Questions and Hypothesis

Writing is not a linear but a recursive process, where students plan, revise and redraft what they produce. It is through these different stages that the student develops his idea on the

topic and the text at the same time. Writing is also considered a difficult and challenging aspect to be learned in a foreign language. For this reason, we have to put the following research questions:

- 1- What lies behind the difficulty of the writing skill?
- 2- Are students aware of the criteria that characterize a successful, good piece of writing?
- 3- To what extent the adoption of the process approach and the steps it entails are important in diminishing or preventing students' problems in writing?

On the basis of these questions, the following hypothesis is put forward:

If learners are made aware of the process of writing, how to proceed through the different stages of writing successfully, they would write more easily and produce more effective compositions.

4. Tools of Research

Concerning data collection, we would administer two main questionnaires; one to teachers, and the other to second-year learners. The teachers' questionnaire would be directed to those who have been teaching writing for a considerably long period of time. The purpose behind this is to make sure that their suggestions are the product of a continuous interacting with language learners during many years of evaluation and observation of learners' needs and requirements.

Since it is not possible to deal with all the second year students (because of time constraints), we have to take a representative sample (we will explain the randomization process later on) to be given the questionnaire. The aim of the learners' questionnaire is to gauge the students' level of awareness of the writing process and the writing techniques underlying this process.

After collecting the required data for this research, we would analyze them quantitatively and qualitatively to understand the issue under study; i.e., the importance of understanding the stages of writing which, we believe will smooth the progress of developing the writing skill.

5. Structure of the Study

The present research will be basically divided into three main chapters. Chapters One and Two will be devoted to the literature review and Chapter Three will be about the analysis of both quantitative and qualitative responses and the results obtained from the teachers and learners questionnaires.

The first chapter will be devoted to the skill of writing. It will comprise a description of writing; what writing is about; the criteria that make for writing a good paragraph/essay; and the reasons for teaching writing. We will also try to shed light on the relationship between writing and other language skills including speaking and reading. In this chapter, we will also try to explore the resources of the writing skill and the different writing approaches.

In the second chapter of the literature review, we will try to discuss the subject of our research according to the different theoretical standpoints. We will consecrate a good deal of our discussion for identifying learners' capacities of understanding the writing techniques and how they can best develop them. We will concentrate on the main three techniques of the process approach, namely prewriting, drafting and revising, and the ways of raising learners' awareness about their application in developing an effective piece of writing.

Finally, the last chapter of the proposed research will be mainly an investigation of the degree of second-year LMD students' commitment to the process of writing and its effects on their achievement in writing.

CHAPTER ONE

The Writing Skill

CHAPTER ONE

THE WRITING SKILL

Introduction.....	07
1.1. Nature of Writing.....	07
1.2. Reasons for Teaching Writing.....	09
1.3. Effective Writing.....	09
1.3.1- Organization.....	10
1.3.2- Clarity.....	11
1.3.3- Coherence.....	12
1.3.4- Word Choice.....	13
1.3.5- Mechanics.....	13
1.4. Writing and Other Language Skills.....	14
1.4.1- Four Language Skills Working Together.....	14
1.4.2- Writing and Speaking.....	15
1.4.3- Writing and Reading.....	16
1.5. Approaches to Teaching Writing.....	18
1.5.1- The Controlled-to-Free Approach.....	18
1.5.2- The Free-Writing Approach.....	19
1.5.3- The Product-Oriented Approach.....	20
1.5.4- The Process-Oriented Approach.....	20
1.5.5- The Genre Approach.....	21
Conclusion	22

Introduction

Learning a foreign language requires learning the four skills of this language. Language teachers usually follow a certain order; beginning with listening, speaking, reading and then writing. The reason behind leaving writing at the end is that it is viewed as the most important, most difficult and most sophisticated one compared with the other language skills. Writing, therefore, is a fundamental skill in language learning; it is also a difficult skill that requires considerable effort and practice on the learner's part to reach an acceptable level of writing. In this chapter, we will present the reader with the writing skill in general, including the different definitions, the criteria that make for producing an effective piece of writing, and the reasons for writing to be taught. It also deals with the writing skill and the other skills speaking and reading comparatively. It also explores the resources of the writing skill and the different writing approaches.

1.1. Nature of Writing

Writing is generally a group of letters or symbols written or marked on a surface as a means of communication (Collins, 2003). This definition suggests that writing is the activity of producing a piece of written language which is designed to be read. However, writing is more than being a matter of transcribing language into symbols. Just as speech is more than producing sounds, writing is much more than the production of graphic symbols; these symbols have to be arranged according to some conventions to form words, and to combine them to form sentences. A sequence of sentences, short or long, but coherent is an adequate means of communication. According to Collins and Gentner (1980: 62), the learner/writer should consider the four structural levels in writing starting with the word structure, sentence structure, paragraph structure, and overall text structure. Coordinating all these aspects is a staggering job that is definitely more than a simple activity of putting symbols together.

In addition to the intricacy of structure, other psychological, linguistic and cognitive related issues interfere to make writing a complex activity for both native speakers and language learners. Byrne (1991: 4) explains that writing is a difficult activity because it is neither a natural nor a spontaneous activity and that “the problems related to writing are usually grouped under three headings which overlap to some extent: psychological, linguistic and cognitive.”

Moreover, writing is directly linked to people’s roles in society. According to Tribble (1996: 12) to be deprived of the opportunity to learn how to write is “to be excluded from a wide range of social roles, including those which the majority of people in industrialized societies associate with power and prestige.” In the same direction goes Kress (1989; in Tribble, 1996), emphasizing that learning to write is not just a question of developing a set of mechanical ‘orthographic’ skills but it also involves learning a new set of cognitive and social relations.

In terms of pedagogy, writing is a central element in the language teaching setting as students need to write down notes and to take written exams. Yet, over the years it has seemed that writing has been seen as only a support system for learning grammar and vocabulary rather than a skill in its own right. However, trainers and methodologists have looked again at writing in the foreign language classroom and acknowledged the importance of writing as a vital skill for speakers of a foreign language as much as for everyone using their first language (Harmer, 2004).

So, the idea we draw from the previous definitions is that writing is the activity of being able to communicate with language through a graphic representation of ideas. It is also a difficult, sophisticated, prestigious social activity of communication and an important skill for language learners as well as native speakers.

1.2. Reasons for Teaching Writing

Almost all human beings grow up speaking their first language (and sometimes second or third) as a matter of course. Spoken language, for a child/learner is acquired naturally as a result of being exposed to it, whereas the ability to write has to be consciously learned. Harmer (2004: 3) agrees that writing should be learned because it could not be naturally acquired like speaking, though, he provides more reasons to teach writing for EFL learners which include reinforcement, language development, learning style, and most importantly, writing as a skill in its own right. Harmer (1998: 79) illustrates the reasons for teaching writing as follows:

- *Reinforcement*: Some learners acquire languages in a purely oral/aural way, but most of them benefit greatly from seeing the language written down.
- *Language development*: The mental activity learners go through in order to construct proper written texts is all part of the ongoing learning experience.
- *Learning style*: For many learners, producing language in a slower way is something they appreciate. Writing provides time and ease for learners more than face-to-face communication does.
- *Writing as a skill*: Learners need to know how to write essays, how to put written reports together and how the writing system operates (for example, in terms of conventions such as punctuation, paragraph construction) just as they need to know how to pronounce language appropriately.

1.3. Effective Writing

Writing in English within an academic context requires some criteria of acceptability relative to different aspects of writing which include organization, vocabulary, language use, punctuation, accurate capitalization and paragraphing. According to Starkey (2004), an

effective piece of writing is the one that is organized, clear, and coherent, with accurate language and effective word choice.

1.3.1- Organization

In the process of writing, information should be presented to readers in a structured format; even short pieces of writing have regular, predictable patterns of organization. The striking advantage of organization is to help the reader to believe what you are saying, and to willingly follow your lead. Starkey (2004: 2) states:

By following [an organized method of writing], you will guide your reader from your first to last sentence. He or she will be able to see how the various points you make in your [piece of writing] work together and how they support your thesis.

Organization is usually decided upon through certain techniques that precede the actual act of writing. In other words, the writer decides about the organization of his written work before engaging into the physical act of writing through some prewriting techniques including mainly free-writing and brainstorming. The use of the prewriting techniques helps at making an effective plan that guarantees the organization of the written work because a plan is usually made after reading and classifying the notes gathered from the prewriting activity.

According to Chelsa (2006), Creme and Lea (2008), and Galko (2002), free-writing and brainstorming are effective for shaping the learner's thoughts allowing some time to make connection with the assigned subject noting everything and anything that comes to mind. The two preceding techniques are similar in that they are timed, and flowing exercises meant to elicit many thoughts and ideas on a given topic. However, free-writing requires putting whole sentences or phrases on paper whereas brainstorming involves creating a list that might contain various individual thoughts that make sense in a particular order.

1.3.2- Clarity

The learner's goal when writing in an academic context is to convey information, including the fact that he can write well (Starkey, 2004: 11). Clarity is an essential element of writing the learner should become skilled at in order to make his writing readable, and guarantee that those who read it understand exactly what he means to say. Murray and Hughes (2008: 86) emphasize the importance of clarity as a fundamental element in making one's writing easy to be read and accessible. According to them, the key to achieve clarity is to make sentences short and to the point, the learner/writer should be relevant, make every word count, and try not to express more than one idea in each sentence.

In order to achieve clarity in writing, according to Starkey (2004: 12-9), the learner should:

- *Eliminate ambiguity* by avoiding words or phrases that have more than one possible interpretation. The learner should focus on what he means and keep away from any language structure that could mislead the reader.
- *Use powerful, precise adjectives and adverbs.* One way to accomplish clarity is to use powerful and specific adjectives and adverbs. The right modifiers (adjectives and adverbs) help out the learner to convey his message across in fewer, more accurate words. For example, *Chihuahua* can take the place of *little dog*; *exhausted* can take the place of *really tired*; and *late* can take the place of *somewhat behind schedule*.
- *Be concise*, this means getting right to the point without unnecessary spinning around, worthless repetition or wordiness. Starkey (2004: 15) sees that: "wordiness is boring, and it takes up valuable time and space... there are two equally important approaches to more concise writing: eliminating unnecessary words and phrases, and using active (as opposed to passive) voice whenever possible." Moreover, he provides two reasons for avoiding repetition of ideas and information in one's writing:

The first is that unnecessary repetition is a sign of sloppy writing. It is easy to say the same thing a number of times, varying it slightly each time. It is harder to say something well once, and continue writing about your next idea or example. Second, wordiness wastes valuable time and space. If you are

writing while the clock is ticking, or are limited to a number of words or pages, say it right the first time and move on.

Starkey (2004: 17)

1.3.3- Coherence

Coherence is an important element in any kind of writing. It is particularly crucial in academic writing, where success or failure may depend upon how clearly the learner has managed to communicate his ideas and points of argument to his reader. No matter how insightful or original those ideas may be, if he is not able to present them in a clear and logical way, their meaning and value is lost. Kane (2000) and Creme and Lea (2008) among others, agree that coherence has a great role in making a good piece of writing. According to them, coherence has to do with arranging and linking one's ideas in a way that makes them most easily understood by the reader.

Murray and Hughes (2008: 45) notice that a good writer is the one “who sticks his ideas together as links in a chain, each link connecting the one before it with the one after. If any links are missing, the connections become unclear and the argument structure breaks down.”

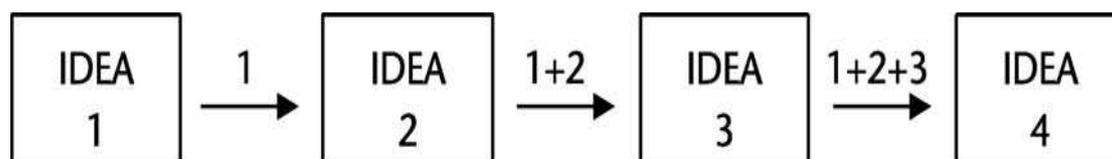


Figure.1.1: A Sequence of Ideas. (Murray and Hughes, 2008: 46)

A piece of academic writing, as shown in figure.1.1, has a history in the sequence of building up its academic structure. The reader is only able to make sense of what he is reading at any particular point because it connects clearly with what has gone before, that is why the learner/writer should make that connection clear.

1.3.4- Word Choice

The best way for the learner to accurately convey his ideas in writing is to choose the right words. Doing so ensures that the reader understands what the writer is really writing. According to Starkey (2004) and Kane (2000), there are two aspects the learner should consider while choosing the words to be used: *denotation and connotation*.

Denotation is the basic or literal meaning of a word. Learners should make sure of the correctness of their words, because sometimes some confusion may stem from words that sound or look similar (but have very different meaning), words and usages that sound correct (but in fact are not considered standard English), or words that are misused so often that their usage is thought to be correct. *Connotation* "is a word's implied meaning which involves emotions, cultural assumptions, and suggestions" (Starkey, 2004: 21). The learner should confirm that each used word denotes exactly what he intends to it, considering connotation requires the learner thinking beyond the dictionary, to what might be implied or inferred by his writing.

According to what has been said before, both denotative and connotative meanings must be considered when making word choice. However, this is not all, the learner should also consider whether the used words might confuse or possibly offend his audience. This means avoiding informal language, clichés and slang words.

1.3.5- Mechanics

In composition, 'mechanics' refers to the appearance of words, to how they are spelled or arranged on paper. The fact that the first word of a paragraph is usually indented, for example, is a matter of mechanics (Kane, 2000: 15). Conventions of writing require that a sentence begins with a capital letter and ends with full-stop punctuation (period, question mark, or exclamation point). These types of conventions or mechanics are very significant in

putting together a good quality piece of writing because no matter how original are the learner's ideas, if he cannot express them in a clear and accurate manner. Starkey (2004) addressed writing mechanics in terms of grammar, spelling, punctuation and capitalization.

Grammar is a key element not only in writing, but in language as a system of communication in general. Having a good knowledge of the parts speech, the structures of the language and its rhetorical devices and knowing how to manipulate them in order to write comprehensively is what writing requires. Brooks and Penn (1970: 20) state:

... For one thing, in writing, we must understand the structure of the language, what the parts of speech do, how the words relate to one another, what individual words mean, the rules of grammar and punctuation.

Capitalization and punctuation marks are integral parts of written English. Among other things, "they indicate pauses and sentence boundaries and also eliminate ambiguity. A well punctuated and capitalized piece of writing should make your work easier to read and understand and will therefore help it make a more favourable impression on your readers" (Murray and Hughes 2008: 185). Similarly, *spelling* is one of the factors which need to be taken into account by students when dealing with writing, because it is an aspect many teachers in an EFL context focus on when evaluating students work. Correct spelling gives one's work credibility. Not only will the reader know that one is educated, but also that he is careful about his work.

1.4. Writing and Other Language Skills

1.4.1- Four Language Skills Working Together

Writing is not an isolated skill. Four language skills work together to enhance the development of each other: speaking, listening, reading and writing. Listening and reading are the receptive skills (taking in information), and speaking and writing are the productive skills (giving out information). According to Johnson (2008), language skills enhance each other;

i.e. the development of individual language skills improves the development of others. For example, listening and hearing other people use language enhances one's ability to speak, reading helps students become better writers, and writing helps in developing phonic knowledge and enhances reading fluency.

1.4.2- Writing and Speaking

Both writing and speaking are clearly productive activities in that they create language outcomes just as listening and reading are both passive activities. When it comes to communication, Kress (1989; in Tribble, 1996: 12) sees that speaking and writing are complementary skills and emphasizes that “the person who commands both the forms of writing and of speech is therefore constructed in a fundamentally different way from the person who commands the form of speech alone.” However, the physical act of speaking and writing are very different. What follows is a summary of some differences between writing and speaking as seen by Brown (1994):

- *Performance*: oral language is transitory and must be processed in real time, while written language is permanent and can be read and re-read as often one likes.
- *Production time*: writers generally have more time to plan, review and revise their words before they are finalized, while speakers have a little or no time to do this.
- *Distance* between the writer and the reader in both time and space eliminates much of the shared context that is present between speaker and listener in face to face contact and this necessitates greater explicitness from the part of the writer.

- *Orthography* in writing carries a limited amount of information compared to the richness of devices available to speakers to enhance a message (for example: stress, intonation, pitch, volume, pressing).
- *Complexity*: written language tends to be characterized by longer clauses and more subordinators, while spoken language tends to have shorter clauses connected by coordinators, as well as more redundancy (repetition of nouns and verbs).
- *Formality*: because of the social and cultural uses of which writing is ordinarily put, writing tends to be more formal than speaking.
- *Vocabulary*: Written texts tend to contain a wider variety of words, and lower frequency words, than oral speech.

Harmer (2004: 7-10) makes the difference between writing and speaking in terms of time and space of communication, participants, process, organization, language, signs symbols and product. However, he sees that in some contexts, these differences between writing and speaking fade away. For example, the use of written language in text messaging and internet chatting seems to be more like speech than written discourse where speakers seem to be speaking while using written words. As another example, is the degree to which a formal speech follows the rules of writing in terms of structure, organization, and use of language; such types of speech seem to be more writing rather than speaking.

1.4.3- Writing and Reading

From a historical point of view, reading was more emphasized than writing in education. In Britain, for example, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, reading took the primary attention in education before writing, and this is because as Foggart (1993; in Tribble, 1996:

11) states: “it is desirable that the majority should read in the way they can be given instructions and can be educated into a particular ideology; writing on the other hand, assumes the giving of instructions and the formation of views about society.” In an industrialized society, reading is a survival skill which enables you to react to range of social demands (reading is a pervasive requirement: looking at an alarm clock, glancing at the news paper, or checking the departures board). Writing, in contrast, is a less necessary skill but one which can lead to more proactive roles.

When looking at the nature of writing and reading, it seems that the two skills are separate in that reading is a passive activity and that writing is a productive one; still, these two language skills are complementary and can be closely developed. As it is seen by Johnson (2008: 7), the apparent relationship between the preceding skills is that reading helps students become better writers. Through reading, students have incidental contact with the rules of grammar, so they develop a sense for the structure of the language and grammar and increase their vocabulary. Therefore, Reading in the writing classroom is understood as the appropriate input for acquisition of writing skills because it is generally assumed “that reading passages will somehow function as primary models from which writing skills can be learned, or at least inferred” Eisterhold (1990: 88).

The nature of this reading-writing link, though not well-defined is often thought to be like Krashen’s notion. Krashen (1984: in Eisterhold, 1990: 88) claims that the development of writing ability occurs via comprehensible input with a low affective filter. He theorizes that writing competence derives from large amounts of self-motivated reading for interest and/or pleasure.

The evidence that there is an existing relationship between reading and writing is the results of the correlational study carried by Stotsky (1983) that came out with the following results:

1- There are correlations between reading achievement and writing ability. Better writers tend to be better readers.

2- There are correlations between writing quality and reading experience. Better writers read more than poorer writers.

3- There seem to be correlations between reading ability and measures of syntactic complexity in writing. Better readers tend to produce more syntactically mature writing than poorer readers (ibid).

1.5. Approaches to Teaching Writing

In the early 1960's, writing was a neglected skill; it was argued that language is most important in its spoken form and less important in the written one; and for this reason, writing was not given much attention. When writing was first included in teaching curricula, it was viewed as a simple reinforcement of "what students learned to say" (Rivers, 1968: 51).

After the 1960's, writing gained importance and was considered central in the language learning context. Its understanding and use became largely valued in every discipline, each of which requires a specific method of teaching. Consequently, a great number of approaches and methods of teaching have come out. Although none of these approaches can be considered as ideal, they have all proved to be successful in one period or another (Nemouchi, 2008).

1.5.1- The Controlled-to-Free Approach

In the 1950's and 1960's, when the audio-lingual approach prevailed, writing was taught only to reinforce speech where speech was considered primary. It was believed that the mastery of grammar rules would lead to the improvement of the spoken form of a foreign language, and this is the reason for allocating grammar teaching to writing. In this approach,

students are not supposed to create their own texts; the only writing learners do is to write grammar exercises (Leki, 1992). The controlled-to-free approach is sequential: students are first given sentence exercises, then paragraphs to copy or manipulate grammatically by changing questions to statements, present to past, or plural to singular. Only after having improved this type of highly controlled-writing can students move to free composition in which they can express their own ideas (ibid).

Perhaps, one of the most outstanding attributes of the controlled-to-free approach is that it emphasizes accuracy rather than fluency or originality (Ghaith, 2002). It focuses on the structural aspect of the language and neglects its communicative aspect as Raimes (1983: 76) states: “this approach stresses three features: grammar, syntax and mechanics.”

1.5.2- The Free-Writing Approach

The free-writing approach is essentially based on the belief that when we write freely and frequently, we improve our ability in that language skill. Free writing means that the students write without teachers’ interference, and are encouraged to emphasize content and fluency first (Raimes, 1983).

This approach stresses writing quantity rather than quality. Teachers who use this approach assign vast amounts of free writing on given topics with only minimal correction. The emphasis in this approach is on content and fluency rather than on accuracy and form (Ghaith, 2002). Once ideas are down on paper, according to Raimes (1983), grammatical accuracy, organization and the rest will gradually follow. Contrary to the controlled to free approach, the role of the teacher is limited to reading learners’ productions and sometimes making comments on the expressed ideas. In other words, pieces of writing should not be corrected, but possibly read aloud and the content commented upon.

1.5.3- The Product-Oriented Approach

Broadly speaking, a product-oriented approach, as the title indicates, is concerned with the final result of the writing process. It is mainly based on activities which require from the learner to be engaged in imitating and transforming model texts. Indeed, the imitation of a model was seen as crucial. White (1998) sees the model based approach as follows:

Study the model → *Manipulate elements* → *Produce a parallel text*

Figure.1.2: Model Based Approach. (White 1998: 46)

The model text is always taken as the starting point. It is studied and analyzed from all points of view: structures of grammar, content, sentences, organization, and rhetorical patterns. After manipulating these features, students are given a new topic and invited for a parallel writing task.

The interest of such an approach is in the correct use of form. Naturally the role of the model is important in the sense that it leads students from a point of departure to an end with a task to replicate. The model then comes first and shows a completed text as well. “What the model does not demonstrate”, says white (1998: 6), “is how the original arrived at that particular product. In other words, it gives no indication of the process.”

1.5.4- The Process-Oriented Approach

This approach shifted the attention from the traditional view of looking at writing purely as a product to emphasize the process of writing. Students need to realize that what is first written down on paper is not the final product, it is only the beginning. The process approach depends on giving students time to work on what they want to write, going from pre-writing activities to the final draft. According to Nemouchi (2008), the major aim of this approach is to train students how to generate ideas for writing, plan these ideas, take into account the type

of audience, draft and redraft in order to produce a final written paper that is likely to communicate their ideas.

The process approach according to many scholars may include identified stages of the writing process such as: pre-writing, writing and rewriting. When the first draft is created, it is refined into subsequent drafts with the assistance of peer or teacher conferencing (Murray, 1992). According to Gocsik (2007), in a process-oriented approach, the learner should ask a number of questions before plunging into the activity of writing "ranging from *What do I write about? To Who is my audience? To How do I structure my essay? To What sort of language and voice should I use?*"

In order to shed more light on the process-oriented approach and reinforce the given definitions, we will quote Murray (1992: 16):

The process-oriented approach refers to a teaching approach that focuses on the process a writer engages in when constructing meaning. This teaching approach concludes with editing as a final stage in text creation, rather than an initial one as a product-oriented approach. The process-oriented approach may include identified stages of the writing process such as: pre-writing, writing and re-writing. Once the rough draft has been created, it is polished into subsequent drafts with the assistance of peer and teacher conferencing.

1.5.5- The Genre Approach

The genre approach to teaching writing is mainly concerned, as the name indicates, on teaching particular genres that students need control of in order to succeed in particular situations. This might include a focus on the language and discourse features of the texts as well as the context in which the text is produced (Nemouchi, 2008: 92-3).

The fundamental principle that underlies the genre-based approach is that language is functional; that is through language that we achieve certain goals. Moreover, language is a contextual based tool of communication; language is always occurring in particular social and

cultural contexts, and thus, cannot be understood outside its context. The need for teaching writing through a genre-oriented approach then, is because language is functional: it is meant to serve functional purposes as Painter (1989: 21) notes:

Language is a functional resource in that the language system can be viewed as having the form it does because of what it is called upon to do. The needs of language learners have shaped the linguistic system itself.

Conclusion

From what has been said before, we come to a conclusion in which we say that writing is a difficult skill that requires both learners and teachers to have some necessary knowledge and information that would reinforce and make of the teaching/learning of the writing skill easier and important. One way to achieve this is to look at writing as a process that contains different stages rather than a product of accurate use of grammar and syntax and good range of vocabulary. In the following chapter, we will examine the nature of writing as a process under the belief that increasing learners' awareness of writing as a process will help them to overcome the difficulties they face when they write, and therefore produce well written texts.

CHAPTER TWO

The Process Approach as Awareness Raising

CHAPTER TWO

THE PROCESS APPROACH AS AWARENESS RAISING

Introduction	24
2.1. The Writing Process.....	24
2.2. The Process Approach.....	26
2.3. Models of the Writing Process.....	27
2.3.1- The Flower and Hayes Model.....	27
2.3.2- The Bereiter and Scardamalia Model.....	28
2.4. Stages of the Writing Process.....	29
2.4.1- Prewriting.....	29
2.4.2- Drafting.....	30
2.4.3- Reviewing.....	31
2.4.4- Editing.....	32
2.5. Awareness.....	33
2.5.1- Awareness Defined.....	33
2.5.2- Types of Awareness.....	33
2.5.3- Awareness Raising.....	34
Conclusion	35

Introduction

Through the history of language teaching, writing was viewed as a linear sequence of events. The student writer initiates the activity of writing by planning and reflecting on his topic then starts to write. When writing is finished, he improves his writing by checking for errors. Recent years research has stressed the shift of EFL/ESL writing instructions from the traditional approach, that of the product to the modern approach that views writing as a progressive process. The process approach would teach students not only how to edit but also to develop strategies to generate ideas, compose multiple drafts and revise all the written work at all levels. In this chapter, we will support the idea that the activity of writing is intimately connected with a process. We will give a special focus to the process approach and the different steps the learner goes through to produce a piece of writing. It also deals with the main models of the writing process in addition to the importance of awareness raising in developing the writing skill.

2.1. The Writing Process

Since the early 1970's, the nature of written discourse as well as the writing process itself have attracted renewed interest from educational researchers, linguists, applied linguists and teachers. In this period of time, many researchers and educators were interested in exploring the new philosophy that has to do with exploring the different phases through which the student/writer goes to reach his main objective, that of the product (Kroll, 1990).

Many researchers like Raimes (1987), Chenoweth (1987), Hedge (1988), Kroll (1990) and Harmer (2004) acknowledged that writing is a recursive rather than a linear process, that writers rarely write to a preconceived plan or model and that the process of writing creates its own form and meaning. When we talk about writing as a process, we understand that ideas

are generated, put in first draft, organized and arranged in a whole, revised and corrected, and finally written in a final draft.

The process of composition is not a linear one, moving from planning to composing to revising and editing. It would be more accurate to characterize writing as recursive activity in which the writer moves backwards and forwards between drafting and revising with stages of replanning and between.
Hedge (1988: 20)

To explain more, we will present Harmer’s (2004) figures of the writing process:



Figure.2.1: Process of Writing. (Harmer, 2004: 5)

According to Harmer (2004: 5-6), this diagram is not satisfactory; “the process of writing is not linear, as indicated above, but rather recursive. This means that writers plan, draft and edit but then often re-plan, re-draft and re-edit.” That is why Harmer presented the process of writing in a different way, in what he calls the ‘process wheel’.

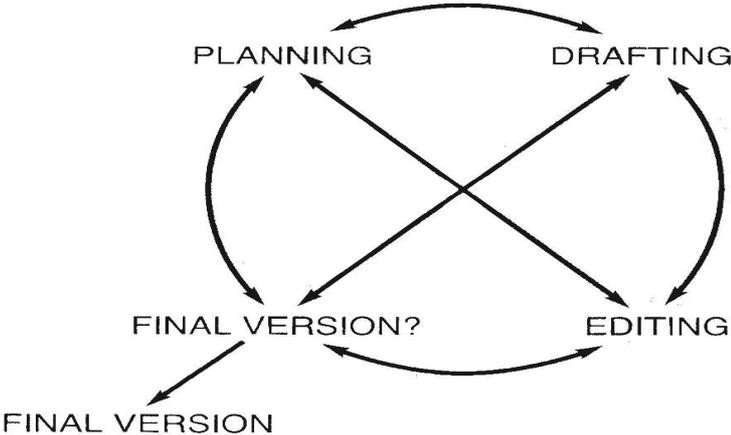


Figure.2.2: Process Wheel. (Harmer, 2004: 6)

Figure 2.2 shows that writers do not follow a neat sequence of planning, drafting and revising, they may move backwards and forwards until the process reaches its culmination by producing the final version.

2.2. The Process Approach

The process approach was first developed by the expressivism view in the late 1960's and early 1970's underneath the leadership of Murray, Elbow and others. Murray (1978), for example focused on the idea of multiple drafts through which learners could discover what they wanted to say. Elbow (1973), with a background as a college teacher came to see writing as 'an organic developmental process' that encouraged the expression of personal thought and self-discovery. The expressivist movement influenced the ways of teaching by providing American colleges of new writing approaches that have been dominated by a product orientation. On the hole, the expressivist view sees writing as a creative act of discovery in which the process the writer goes through is as important as the product Elbow (1981).

The premise in a process-oriented approach is the focus on the stages a writer goes through to create a text, instead of focusing on the final product. In other words, the process approach recognizes that "most people progress through a number of untidy drafts before reaching a final version," as they develop their thoughts and add new ideas (Ur 1996; in Tessema, 2005: 24). The process approach recognizes that students often discover what they want to say as they think and write about a topic. That is why it is recommended that teachers "accept messy drafts as a positive, even essential, stage in writing," and to "treat early drafts as transition stages" (ibid: 24).

In the process approach, content and organization are more important than correction of grammar, spelling, vocabulary and punctuation which occurs gradually and thoughtfully throughout the writing process. Tessema (2005: 24) stresses that correcting these types of mistakes "is part of the language instruction, but too much of it can be discouraging and demoralizing."

One of the major characteristics of the process approach is that it views writing as an act of discovery and creation of meaning. Murray (1978) sees that when drafting, writers find out

what they have to say and when revising they come to check the meaning they have discovered. In the same direction, goes Perl (1979) who confirms that writing itself is an act of discovery and that writers invent or discover the specific words, details and syntactic structures as they write.

2.3. Models of the Writing Process

Research concerned the writing process provided us with useful information about the different stages of the writing activity and clarified the way they activate, function and interconnect. In order to place these developments in perspective, we will refer to two models of writing developed by two pioneers in the field. We shall deal with the well-known Flower and Hayes (1981) model together with that of Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987).

2.3.1- The Flower and Hayes Model

Flower and Hayes (1981) were the first who divided the writing process into three distinct parts: planning, translating and reviewing. In the planning stage, writers make an internal representation of the knowledge he retrieves from the long-term memory. The ideas he generates need to be organized to build up a coherent and meaningful representation before being translated into text. Flower and Hayes (1981) divide the planning stage into three sub-stages: generating, organizing and goal setting. During the generating sub-stage, the writer retrieves from their long-term memory the information relevant to the topic. The organizing sub-stage is concerned with choosing the most important information among the retrieved items and arranging them into an initial plan. Finally, the goal setting sub-stage develops criteria that will help to evaluate the retrieved material in relation to the criteria of purpose and audience.

According to Flower and Hayes' (1981) model, the drafting stage is, actually, a 'translating' stage. In this stage, the writer translates into correct written discourse

information produced and transformed during the planning stage. Flower and Hayes (1981) insist on the necessity of pauses during this stage. Pauses in the translation stage provide the writer with the opportunity to decide how best to express an idea and gives him a chance to decide about what should be written next.

Reviewing in Flower and Hayes (1981) model is the stage that is directed toward the amelioration of the quality of the produced text in relation to the pre-defined goal. As the term indicates, reviewing is the process in which the writer moves backwards during the writing task with the purpose of evaluating and revising his thoughts. The reviewing stage consists of two sub-stages: Reading and Editing. Editing is the procedure that allows the writer to place and correct mistakes and misuses in writing conventions and meaning expressions, it also evaluates the employment of ideas in relation to the established objectives.

2.3.2- The Bereiter and Scardamalia Model

The other significant model that came after the Flower and Hayes (1981) model is that of Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) whose attempt is to draw a difference between the processes used by inexperienced writers and those used by experienced ones. According to Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987), less skilled writers operate at the ‘knowledge telling’ level, while more skilled writers are involved in the ‘knowledge transforming’ level.

The difference between the ‘knowledge telling’ and ‘knowledge transforming’ is that the former is more or less similar to the spontaneous act of speaking where much planning and revising are not required. According to Grabe and Kaplan (1996: 119), the major concern of unskilled writers is to transform their ideas into words, therefore the procedure they take is “...converting oral language experiences into written form without having to worry about issues that will confound the process.”

Contrary to the ‘knowledge telling’ process, ‘knowledge transforming’ is far more complex, frustrating and more skill and practice demanding than the simple activity of putting down thoughts and ideas on paper. According to Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) the ‘knowledge transforming’ process is a problem-solving task where writers deal with two crucial aspects: ‘the content problem space’ and ‘the rhetorical problem space’. In other words, the writer should deal with problems related to the generation of appropriate knowledge and how to best use that knowledge in order to achieve the goals of the writing task.

2.4. Stages of the Writing Process

Probably the model of writing widely accepted by EFL learners is the original planning-writing-reviewing framework established by Flower and Hayes (1981). According to Zamel (1983; in Hyland, 2003: 11), this model sees writing as a “non-linear, exploratory, and generative process whereby writers discover and reformulate their ideas as they attempt to approximate meaning.” Hyland (2003:11) explains that these stages do not occur in a linear sequence; they are recursive, interactive, and potentially simultaneous; i.e. all the work can be reviewed, evaluated and revised, even before any text has been produced at all.

2.4.1- Prewriting

The writer gathers, generates information and plays with ideas during the prewriting stage. Prewriting techniques may include brainstorming, freewriting, clustering, mapping or listing. The writer can also use graphic organizers like charts, story maps, diagrams or clusters. Prewriting is an important phase in the writing process because as stated by Parson (1985: 105): “...students who are encouraged to engage in an array of prewriting experiences have a greater chance for writing achievement than those enjoined to ‘get to work’ on their writing without this kind of preparation.”

According to Murray (1988: 16), prewriting exercises do not only help students to find something to say about a specific topic, they also help them improve their writing skills in that they provide them with opportunities to generate ideas and write with confidence. He states: “practice in writing, no matter how short the exercise is to make yourself confident about your writing and to improve your skills” (ibid).

Usually, the activity of generating ideas ends up by making a plan or an outline. Planning a piece of writing is generally made by reading, organizing and classifying the prewriting notes. An effective plan could guarantee organization, clarity and coherence for the written form since it gives direction to the work by following a logical order in dealing with ideas and information. In emphasizing the importance of planning, Zemach and Rumisek (2003) match the importance of an outline in writing to the importance of skeleton in body. They say that just as the skeleton supports your body without being able to see it, the outline will support your writing by providing its structure.

In the writing class, it is crucial to make students aware of the importance of the prewriting stage. Before getting started to write, it is always helpful that the learner takes a moment and thinks about what he knows about a given topic. The prewriting activity could be practiced in groups or with the whole class participation when it is a group work or individually when the writing assignment is individual. Here, teachers are advised to encourage students spend much more time in the prewriting stage because, we believe, it is the activity that reinforces the different steps of the process and ensures a more acceptable product.

2.4.2- Drafting

Drafting is the ‘physical act of writing’ as referred to by Lindermann (1987: 26). It is the real writing stage where the writer develops his topic on paper. Hedge (1988: 89) defines

drafting as the stage where the writer “puts together the pieces of the text [through] developing ideas [into] sentences and paragraphs within an overall structure.”

When writing the first draft, the student writer should focus on content only and forget about language and mechanical aspects such as grammar, spelling, and punctuation. He must write freely and try to find the best way to communicate his ideas. Concerning the drafting stage Galko (2002: 49) states:

Drafting means writing a rough, or scratch, form of your paper. It is a time to really focus on the main ideas you want to get across in your paper. When drafting, you might skip sections or make notes to yourself to come back and add more examples in certain spots or to check your facts later. As you draft, you do not need to worry about grammar, spelling, or punctuation. You will have time to refine these mechanical parts of your paper at a later stage.

It is worth noting here that drafting should be repeated as many times as necessary until reaching a good draft in the view of the teacher who plays an essential role by taking part in the writing process. While drafting, students are helped to use right words and ideas and they are encouraged to work individually on a composition; however, group composition is a very important technique that helps them to overcome the difficulties of writing through collaborative work where they might discuss structures and language uses.

2.4.3- Reviewing

Reviewing is the stage that always follows the drafting stage and comes before the final stage in the writing process which is editing. The reviewing stage is the process of looking again and discovering a new vision of the writing produced in drafting. It is the stage during which the writer corrects mechanical errors and realizes substantial changes in his writing. Reviewing may involve additions and deletions; changes in word use, sentence structure, and organization as it is stated by Grenville (2001: 153): “[as you revise], you will be looking for changes that will help readers understand the information better or be more convinced by your

argument. Once you have found the places that need fixing, you have to decide whether to cut, add or move.”

Brown and Hood (1989) see that reviewing is the stage where writers check that:

- They have said what they wanted to say
- They have said it in a clear and appropriate way.

Moreover, they stress that reviewing includes more than only checking spelling, grammar and punctuation, it also includes checking that content and purpose are clear and appropriate for the reader in the particular writing situation (ibid: 20).

According to Johnson (2008), reviewing is the heart of the writing, and it could be more productive of advanced final products if it includes input from teachers and/or peers. Indeed, peer review is a key classroom activity that enhances the students’ ability to organize texts and increases their awareness of the importance of readership and that of purpose.

2.4.4- Editing

Editing is the stage where the draft is polished; it is the final step before handing out the final draft. The writer gives attention to mechanics such as punctuation, spelling and grammar. Editing involves the careful checking of the text to ensure that there are no errors of spelling, punctuation, word choice and word order. To shed more light on the drafting phase, we will quote Johnson (2008: 167):

Basically ‘editing’ means making your piece as reader-friendly as possible by making the sentences flow in a clear, easy-to-read way. It also means bringing your piece of writing into line with accepted ways of using English: using the appropriate grammar for the purposes of the piece, appropriate punctuation and spelling, and appropriate paragraphing.

2.5. Awareness

2.5.1- Awareness Defined

Many researchers such as Read (1978) and Donmall (1985) approached the subject of awareness in relation to language. Writing is included in this type of awareness since it is one of the language skills and learning any language requires learning writing. According to Read (1978), language awareness is drawing one's attention to something they already know; it is making the implicit knowledge become explicit. Language awareness can also be defined as "explicit knowledge about language, and conscious perception and sensitivity in language learning, language teaching and language use" (Association for Language Awareness). Donmall (1985: 7), on his part, views language awareness as "a person's sensitivity to and conscious perception of the nature of language and its role in human life."

2.5.2- Types of Language Awareness

Language awareness could be divided according to Garvie (1990) into six interrelated types: *linguistic awareness*, *psycholinguistic awareness*, *discourse awareness*, *communicative awareness*, *sociolinguistic awareness* and *strategic awareness*.

- Linguistic awareness where the aim is to make the language learner aware of the language basic components (phonemes, morphemes and lexical units) and the rules that assemble them in sentences.
- Psycholinguistic awareness: the learner should be more conscious about the study of language acquisition and use in relation to the psychological factors controlling its use and recognition.
- Discourse awareness helps learners to be more aware about the discourse level rather than the sentence level.

- Communicative awareness aims at making learners aware of the use language in a specific context in relation to the purpose, topic, audience and situation.
- Sociolinguistic awareness by which learners could be aware of the influence of the social context on language use.
- Strategic awareness where learners can apply different strategies to solve different learning problems.

2.5.3- Awareness Raising

Raising the learners' awareness about language learning was the interest of many researchers; each one speaks about from a different perspective (grammar, culture, pragmatics, etc). The writing skill as well requires some kind of awareness that has basically to do with the writing process. Writing effective texts, whether in L1 or L2, involves many different areas of knowledge and skill. These include the ability to generate suitable content, and to organize that content coherently; the ability to form syntactically correct sentences, and to link them to form coherent text; and the knowledge of a sufficiently wide range of vocabulary and syntactic patterns to express a variety of concepts. All this is already demanding a great deal of a writer (Caudry, 1988). However, this is not all that is necessary. One very important factor is developing awareness of writing as process and the importance of proceeding through different writing stages in order to achieve good quality of writing.

In this case, learners need to be aware that writing effectively involves dealing with writing as a process and not only as a product of accurate use of grammar and syntax and a good range of vocabulary. They should be made aware through intensive practice of writing which leads further to the effective use of the writing techniques that allow them to decide about what to write, how to write, and how to evaluate what they have written. Thus, making

students aware of the different processes of writing will help them to overcome the difficulties they face when they write, and therefore produce well written texts.

Conclusion

In the process-oriented approach, writing is recursive, developmental and an act of discovery. During the writing activity, students constantly revise and modify their productions. Students are not only evaluated on the final product, but on how they improve when they write. Making learners aware that writing is a process of several stages and not merely a product of original ideas, grammatical sentences and a large stock of vocabulary, will indubitably enhance effective writing.

CHAPTER THREE

Developing the Writing Skill Through Increasing Awareness of the Writing Process

The Teachers Questionnaire

CHAPTER THREE

DEVELOPING THE WRITING SKILL THROUGH INCREASING AWARENESS OF THE WRITING PROCESS

THE TEACHERS QUESTIONNAIRE

Introduction.....	37
3.1.1. Administration of the Questionnaire.....	37
3.1.2. Description of the Questionnaire.....	37
3.1.3. Analysis of the Questionnaire.....	38
3.2.4. Discussion of the Results of the Questionnaire	51
Conclusion	52

Introduction

The present chapter is devoted to the analysis of both teachers and learners questionnaires. In the first section of this chapter, we will deal with the teachers' questionnaire and in the second section of the same chapter; we will analyze the students' questionnaire. The collected data and the obtained results will enable us to diagnose the teaching/learning of writing with its strengths and weaknesses departing from a real situation to suggest the appropriate solutions to the existing problems faced by students when they write. The participation of teachers is very important because they are aware of the students' abilities and the writing skill complexities.

3.1.1. Administration of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire was given to ten teachers of “Written Expression” in the Department of English at Mentouri University – Constantine who have the adequate experience that makes their suggestions and observations valuable for the aim of this research. The teachers were very cooperative in that they handed back the answered copies in less than a week.

3.1.2. Description of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire consists of fifteen (15) open-ended and multiple choice questions divided into three sections as follows:

Section One: General Information (Q1-Q5): It includes general questions about teachers' experience in teaching and the teaching of “Written Expression”. This section also includes questions that aim at finding out teachers' opinions about the programme of “Written Expression” and the time allocated to this module.

Section Two: The Process of Writing (Q6-Q10): It deals with the writing process itself. It seeks at knowing if teachers adopt the process approach in teaching writing or not, and if they

do, it attempts at finding out the learners’ problems in relation to different aspects involved in the writing process.

Section Three: Awareness of the Writing Process (Q11-Q15): This section is composed of questions seeking information about the students’ degree of awareness of the writing process from the teachers’ perspective, different stages of the process and the importance of proceeding through them for good quality of writing.

3.1.3. Analysis of the Questionnaire

Section One: General Information

Question One

How long have you been teaching English?

Years of Teaching	N	%
7-10	02	20
11-20	02	20
21-32	06	60
Total	10	100

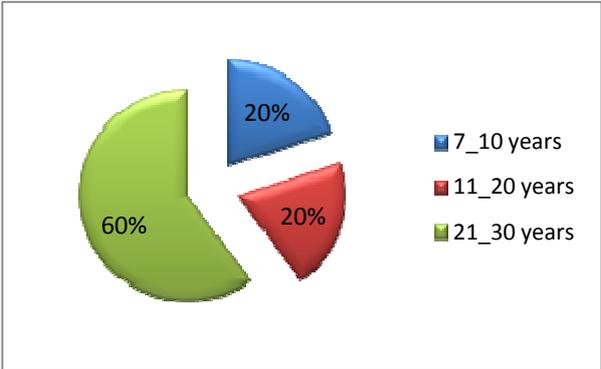


Table 3.1; Figure 3.1: Years of Teaching English

As it is shown in Table 3.1, 60% of the questioned teachers have been teaching English for 21 to 32 years; 20% of them have been teaching English for 11 to 20 years, and the same percentage; i.e. 20% of the teachers have been teaching English for 7 to 10 years. The obtained results imply that teachers' experience is to some extent reliable in the analysis of this questionnaire.

Question Two

How long have you been teaching the module of “Written Expression”?

Years of Teaching W.E	N	%
1-7	05	50
8-15	03	30
16-32	02	20
Total	10	100

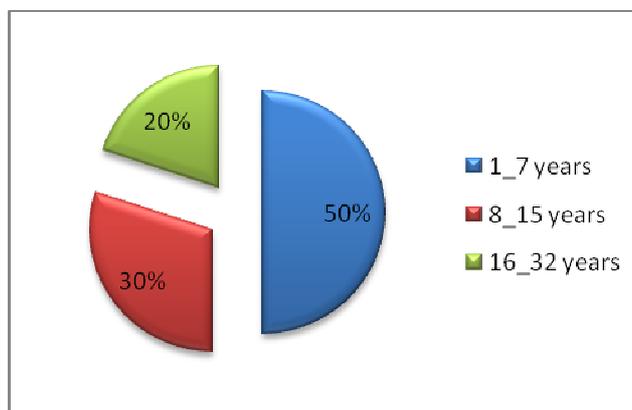


Table 3.2; Figure 3.2: Years of Teaching “Written Expression”

Table 3.2 shows that 50% of the teachers have been teaching writing for 1 to 7 years, 30% of them have been teaching writing for 8 to 15 years; whereas only 20% of them have been teaching writing for 16 to 32. This question reveals that only 02 teachers have been teaching writing from the beginning of their careers in teaching.

When we compare the years of teaching “Written Expression” with those of teaching English, we can see that teachers are not always affected to teach the module of writing. Teachers should acquire more experience in teaching writing so as they could teach efficiently and let students take advantage of such an experience to improve their writing.

Question Three

Do you think that three hours a week are enough for “Written Expression?”

- a- yes b- no

Options	N	%
a	03	30
b	07	70
Total	10	100

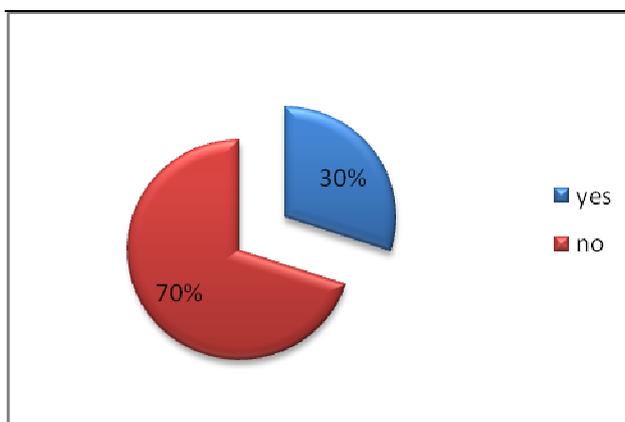


Table 3.3; Figure 3.3: Teachers Opinions about the Time Given to Writing

70% of the teachers claim that the time allocated for “Written Expression” is not enough, while only 30% of them said that three hours a week are enough for “Written Expression”. It is worth noting here that there is a great relationship between time and the different aspects of writing. Students should feel at ease when they write, time pressure should be avoided in order to help students perform well in writing.

Question Four

Do you think that the “Written Expression” programme you are teaching is enough to improve your students’ level in writing?

a- yes

b- no

Options	N	%
a	07	70
b	03	30
Total	10	100

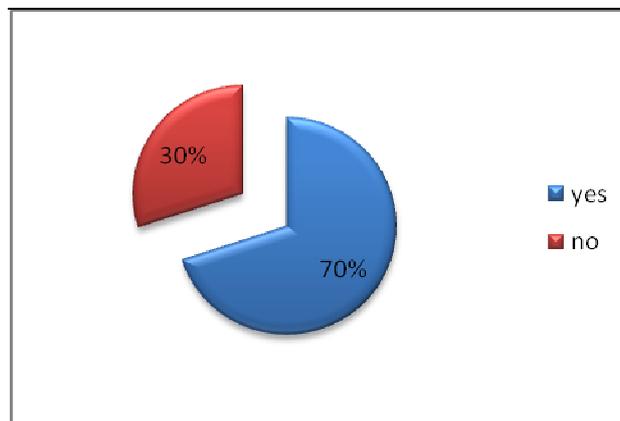


Table 3.4; Figure 4.4: “Written Expression” Programme Sufficiency in Improving Writing

Table 3.4 results that 70% of teachers believe that the “Written Expression” programme they are teaching is enough to improve students’ level in writing.

Question Five

If “No”, please, explain why.

The three (3) teachers who answered “No” to the previous question explained that the “Written Expression” programme is not enough mainly because of the lack of time given to this module where a lot of content is presented and a little of writing is practiced.

Section Two: The Process of Writing

Question Six

What is the approach you use to teach writing?

- a- The Product Approach b- The Process Approach c- Both

Options	N	%
a	01	10
b	06	60
c	03	30
Total	10	100

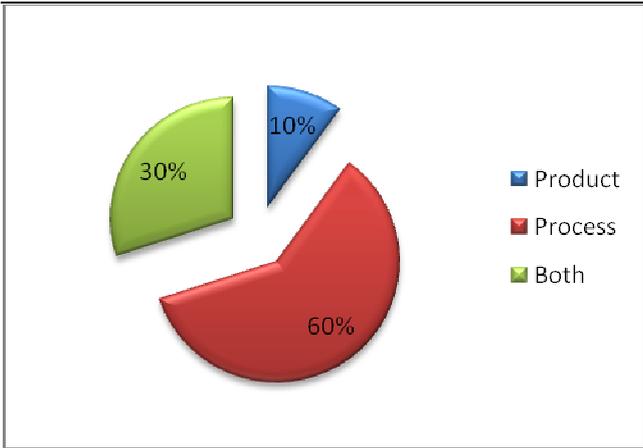


Table 3.5; Figure 3.5: Approaches Used by Teachers in Writing

From the table above, we can see that 60% of the teachers use the process approach to teach writing, 10% of them admit using the product approach, whereas 30% of the teachers use both of them. Teachers who choose to use the process approach view writing as an exploratory and recursive process that involves moving forward and backward respecting the different stages of writing. Teachers who choose the product approach are the ones who emphasize the final draft that the student writer produces.

Question Seven

Please, explain the reasons for choosing this approach.

Teachers provided us with the following reasons for their choice of the different approaches:

a- The Product Approach (01 Teacher)

- “What really counts, irrespective of any approach, is the end product and the product approach is the most appropriate for achieving this goal.”

b- The Process Approach (06 Teachers)

- “The product approach has not been effective enough. The process approach seems to present more opportunities for both the teacher and the student to practice and develop the writing skill.”
- “Adopting specifically the process approach to teaching writing may equip the learners with more practical and guiding steps to follow whenever they engage in producing a piece of writing.”
- “This approach involves students in a step by step practice, which facilitates the activity of composition.”
- “Learners need to organize themselves in writing. This approach helps them achieving automaticity in writing without too much thinking about what to write because they discover what to write as they do the activity of writing.”
- “The process approach is the best way to get students involved into writing.”
- “Writing tends to be more practical; we need to see learners write and encourage them while moving from one step to the other.”

c- Both: Product and Process Approaches (03 Teachers)

- “Going through the different steps of process approach is necessary for students. The product comes later.”
- “Both approaches combined together can be efficient and helps alternate between them depending on the writing task necessities.”
- “The two approaches can be used together depending on the students’ needs and their individual writing abilities.”

Question Eight

What stage of the writing process is most difficult for your students?

a- generating ideas

b- writing initial drafts

c- revising

d- editing

Options	N	%
a	03	30
b	05	50
c	01	10
d	01	10
Total	10	100

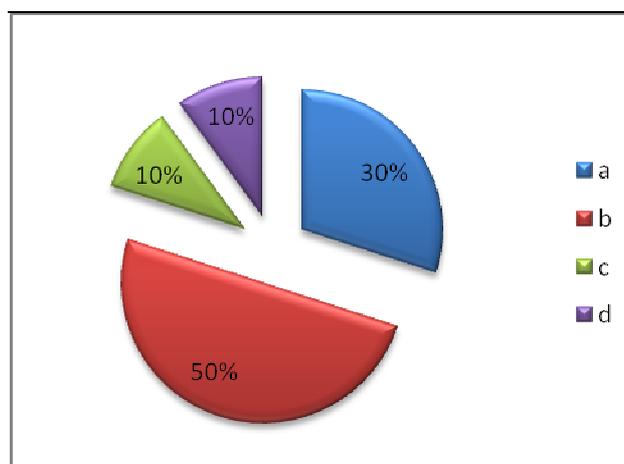


Table 3.6; Figure 3.6: The Most Difficult Stage for Students in the Writing Process

50% of teachers claim that students face the greatest difficulty in writing initial drafts, 30% of the teachers see that students have problems in generating ideas, and only 10% of the teachers see that the difficulty students face in the process of writing lies in revising and editing respectively.

As far as revising and editing are concerned, we note that they do not pose many problems to students when they tackle writing. This finding is really encouraging because it is our belief that these stages are very essential in the writing process since they give the opportunity to students to correct, polish and refine their drafts before handing them out.

Generating ideas and writing initial drafts are the stages that cause most difficulty for students according to the teachers' responses. As far as generating ideas is concerned, it is our belief that jotting down ideas and getting prepared to write is very essential for producing appropriate compositions that is why teachers need to focus on this stage and prepare students well to write. On the other hand, writing initial drafts is the heart of the writing process, and it is logical to consider it as the most difficult step in the writing process; however, students can succeed through it if they bear in mind that whatever they write is not the final draft, they have to come to revise and edit what they have written. In other words, they should follow the flow of their ideas without worrying about the writing mechanics.

Question Nine

Do you help your students when they write?

a- yes

b- no

Options	N	%
a	10	100
b	/	/
Total	10	100

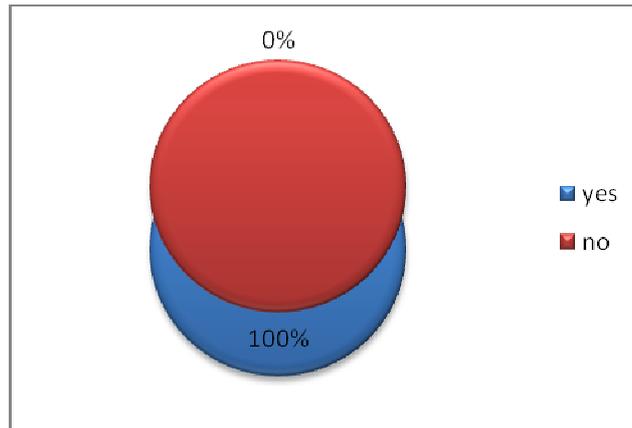


Table 3.7; Figure 3.7: Teachers Helping Students When they Write

Table 3.7 shows that all teachers help their students when they write. Walking around and helping students while writing is essential in guiding them through all the writing steps and raising their awareness of audience consideration.

Question Ten

If “Yes”, do you help them editing: (you can tick more than one box)

- a- content organization b- vocabulary c- grammar d- punctuation e- spelling

Options	N	%
a	10	100
b	06	60
c	08	80
d	08	80
e	04	40

Table 3.8: Aspects Teachers Help Students Editing

Table 3.8 reveals that all teachers help their students editing content organization, 80% of them help students editing grammar and punctuation, 60% of teachers help students editing vocabulary and 40% of them help students editing spelling. These results support the claim of

using the process approach to teaching writing which emphasizes more on the different stages and “the teachers’ role is to guide students through the writing process, avoiding an emphasis on form to help them develop strategies for generating, drafting, and refining ideas” (Hyland, 2003: 12).

Section Thee: Awareness of the Writing Process

Question Eleven

Do you think that making learners aware of writing as a process is essential in writing?

a- yes

b- no

Options	N	%
a	10	100
b	/	/
Total	10	100

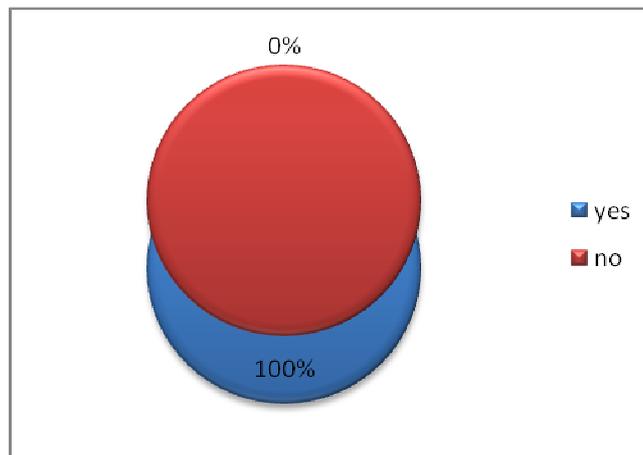


Table 3.9; Figure 3.8: The Importance of Awareness about the Process in Writing

Table 3.9 reveals a total agreement among teachers about the importance of awareness in writing. All the teachers said that making learners aware of the writing process is essential in writing. This result supports the aim of our research in which we seek to know to what

extent following the writing process and the stages it entails will help students produce more effective compositions.

Question Twelve

How much do you think following the stages within the writing process will help your students to produce better compositions?

- a- a lot b- a little c- not at all

Options	N	%
a	10	100
b	/	/
c	/	/
Total	10	100

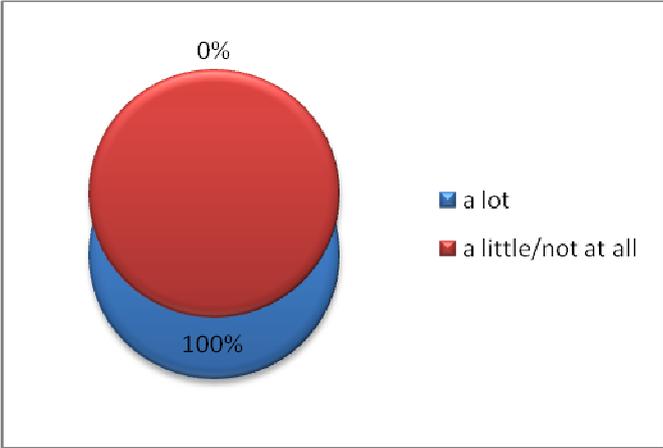


Table 3.10; Figure 3.9: Proceeding through the Writing Steps for Better Compositions

All the teachers see that following the stages within the writing process will help students a lot to produce better compositions. This result proves the effectiveness of the process-orientation in writing; it is for teachers to make students aware of the importance of this step- by-step activity in improving their level in writing.

Question Thirteen

Do you ask your students to proceed through all the writing steps?

a- yes

b- no

Options	N	%
a	09	90
b	01	10
Total	10	100

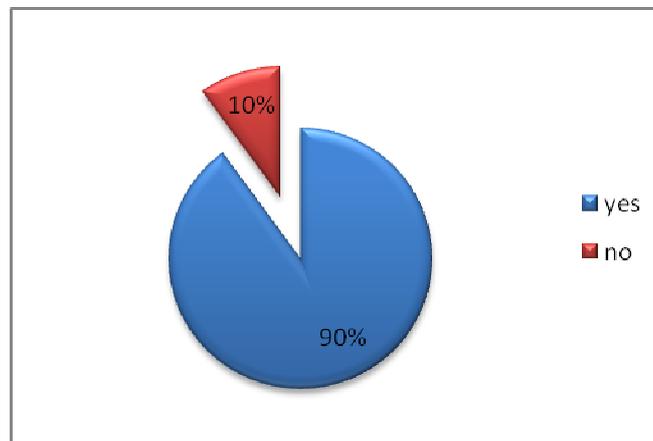


Table 3.11; Figure 3.10: Teachers Asking Students to Proceed Through All the Writing Steps

The great majority of teachers (90%) said that they ask their students to proceed through all the writing steps. Only one teacher (10%) said he does not ask his students to follow the writing steps.

Question Fourteen

Do your students follow all the writing stages?

a- yes

b- no

Options	N	%
a	/	/
b	10	100
Total	10	100

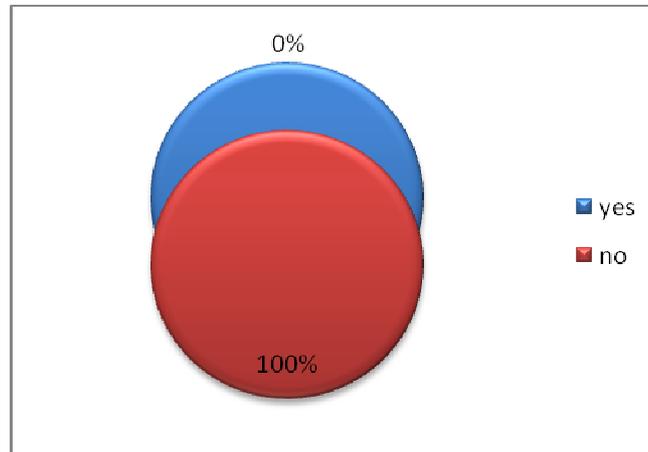


Table 3.12; Figure 3.11: Students Following All the Writing Steps

All the teachers who answered the questionnaire claim that their students do not follow the writing steps. This finding is really surprising, because despite the fact that all the questioned teachers said that they ask their students to proceed through all the writing stages (Question Thirteen), none of the teachers find their students really doing it. In this case, teachers should take some procedures to make their students follow the writing process starting by raising their awareness of the effectiveness of the step-by-step writing through intensive practice and ending by obliging them to follow the writing steps by evaluating each step independently.

Question Fifteen

If “No”, please specify the stages your students proceed through

(You can tick more than one box)

a- prewriting

b- drafting

c- revising

d- editing

Options	N	%
a	06	60
b	08	80
c	03	30
d	04	40

Table 3.13: Stages Students Proceed Through

From table 3.13, we can see that the drafting stage is the most common to students (80%), followed by the prewriting stage (60%). At the end come the editing and revising stages with 40% and 30% respectively. It is not surprising to find that the drafting stage is the most followed by students since it is the heart of the writing process and the ‘actual act of writing’. However, from the teachers’ responses to this question, we find that revising and editing are the most ignored steps by students, a fact that is not beneficial for students when tackling the writing activity since all the writing steps are all of use when producing a piece of paper. Revising for example, is the stage when students look back at their writing and try to adjust content and realize substantial changes, and drafting as another example, is the stage when students correct mechanical mistakes, that is why they should be taken into consideration by students when they write for improving their piece of writing.

3.1.4. Discussion of the Results of the Questionnaire

The analysis of the teachers’ questionnaire reveals a consensus among teachers about the importance of the process-orientation in writing. All teachers agree that the step-by-step writing is a key factor for learners to develop their composing abilities. In the first section which is concerned with general information, the findings show that the majority of teachers (70%) see that the “Written Expression” program they are teaching is enough to improve learners’ proficiency in writing, and this is something really encouraging. In relation to the

time given to the module of writing, the results show that teachers are not satisfied with the three hours a week for writing. This time issue should be taken into consideration, and students should be given more time for text production to make them feel at ease when they write, especially when adopting the process approach which requires different stages with multiple drafts.

The section of the process of writing shows that the majority of teachers (60%) use the process approach, and 30% of them use the process approach in addition to the product approach (see table 3.5). As shown in table 3.6, drafting is the stage that causes most difficulties for students. The major reason for these difficulties comes from the learners' reduced awareness about the recursive nature of writing where students can move forward and backward to make the necessary changes.

The analysis of the last section –awareness of the writing process- reveals that all teachers admit that making learners aware of the writing process will help them a lot to produce better compositions (Q11, Q12). From the teachers' responses, we can see that the majority of them ask their students to follow the writing steps (table 3.11). However, the majority of students do not follow their teachers' advice and deny the process through which a piece of writing is produced.

Conclusion

The obtained results show that the writing skill is a complex activity that requires much time and practice from the learner's part and a lot of experience and guiding from the teacher's part. A focus should be put on the process approach rather than the product approach since the product is the result of any process of writing. Teachers should guide students through the writing process avoiding an emphasis on form to help them develop

strategies for generating, drafting and organizing ideas. Awareness of the importance of the writing process, as the results showed, is essential in the writing activity. Learners need to know that proceeding through the writing steps is not a waste of time; each stage contributes in making effective writing and in diminishing the troubles students face when they write.

The Students Questionnaire

CHAPTER THREE

DEVELOPING THE WRITING SKILL THROUGH INCREASING AWARENESS OF THE WRITING PROCESS

THE STUDENTS QUESTIONNAIRE

Introduction.....	55
3.2.1. Administration of the Questionnaire.....	55
3.2.2. Description of the Questionnaire.....	55
3.2.3. Analysis of the Questionnaire.....	56
3.2.4. Discussion of the Results of the Questionnaire.....	67
Conclusion	68

Introduction

In an EFL context, it seems appropriate to give students the opportunity to express their ideas not only by means of assignments, but via questionnaires as well. The aim of this questionnaire is to gain a thorough understanding of how students perceive the writing skill, the process approach and the importance of awareness about the process in writing. In this section, we will see the results of the students' questionnaire to check the validity of the research hypothesis.

3.2.1. Administration of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire was given to 25-second year students chosen randomly from the Department of English at Mentouri University – Constantine. The students answered the questionnaire in the classrooms, and this number of students constitutes the sample of this research. The administered questionnaire discusses an issue that is shared by almost all students; it does not need a great number of students to be analyzed, the majority of second-year students face the same difficulties in writing since it is this year that they start write compositions.

3.2.2. Description of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire consists of fourteen (14) open-ended and multiple-choice questions divided into three sections as follows:

Section One: General Information (Q1-Q3): It is to get an idea about how students view the module of “written expression”. This section is devoted to see whether “written expression” is interesting or not and whether the amount of time allocated to this module is sufficient or not.

Section Two: The Process of Writing (Q4-Q8): It is about the writing process. It aims at exploring how students deal with writing taking into account the different aspects involved in the writing process.

Section Three: Awareness of the Writing Process (Q9-Q14): This section is composed of questions seeking information about students’ awareness of the writing process, different stages of the process and the importance of proceeding through these stages to achieve a good quality of writing.

3.2.3. Analysis of the Questionnaire

Section One: General Information

Question One

How do you find the module of “Written Expression”?

a- very interesting b- interesting c-not really special d- do not know

Options	N	%
a	12	48
b	12	48
c	01	04
d	/	/
Total	25	100

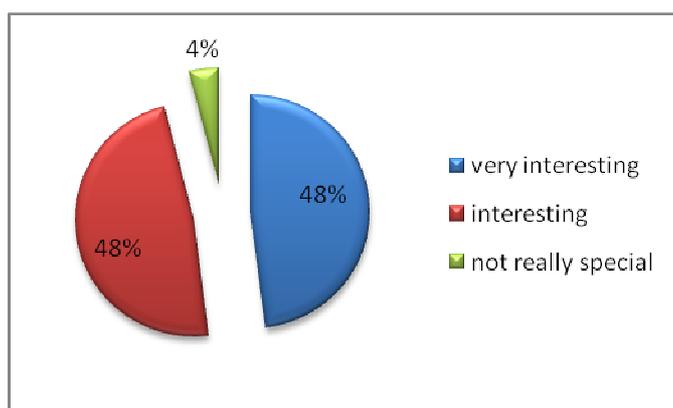


Table 3.14; Figure 3.12: Students Attitudes towards the Module of “Written Expression”

Table 3.14 shows that 96% of the students find the module of “Written Expression” interesting. This percentage is equally divided on option (a) very interesting (48%) and option (b) interesting (48%). On the other hand, there is only one student 04% who said that “Written Expression” is not interesting. This result demonstrates that the students are aware of the importance of writing. It is to teachers to guide them and help them get more motivated and interested.

Question Two

Do you think that three hours a week are enough for “Written Expression”?

a- yes

b- no

Options	N	%
a	07	28
b	18	72
Total	25	100

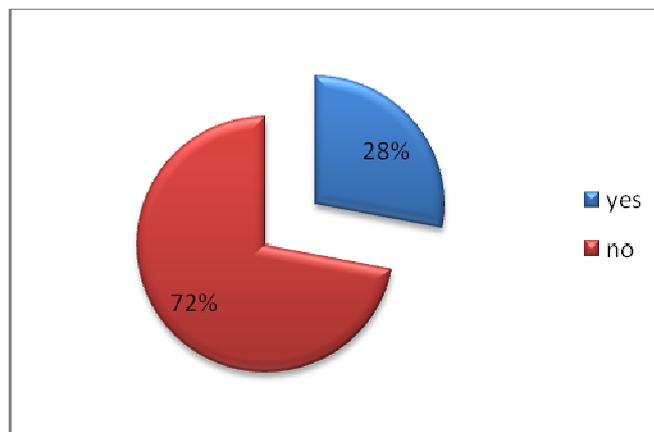


Table 3.15; Figure 3.13: Students’ Opinions about the Time Given to “Written Expression”

Responses to the question asking the students if three hours a week are enough or not for the “Written Expression” module show that 72% of them think it is not; only 28% think it

is. These results show that students should be given enough time to work at ease and to avoid working under pressure in order to develop their writing abilities.

Question Three

If “No”, please, explain why.

The justification of the 18 students who reported that the time devoted for the module of “Written Expression” is not enough can be summed up in the following points:

- We do not have enough time for producing a piece of writing.
- We have a little time to practice writing since the greater part of time is devoted to the study of different writing theories and mechanisms.
- Because of the lack of time, the teacher tends to comment on the content and organization of ideas without giving any attention to vocabulary and punctuation.
- The short time allotted to the practice of writing obliges us to pass up some writing stages which are considered very important in writing.

Section Two: The Process of Writing

Question Four

After reading the topic you are supposed to write about, what do you do?

- a- start immediately to write b- take a moment and think about which ideas to include
c- make an outline and follow it d- write down your ideas into sentences or phrases

Options	N	%
a	02	08
b	06	24
c	07	28
d	10	40
Total	25	100

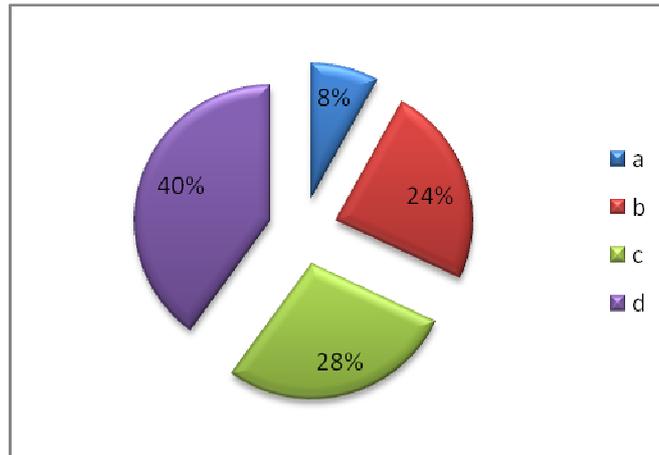


Table 3.16; Figure 3.14: What Students Do after Reading the Topic they are Supposed to Write about

Table 3.16 shows that after reading the topic of the composition, the great majority of students 40% write down their ideas into sentences or phrases. These results suggest that the most important aspect for the students is to jot down ideas and organize them before starting actually to write, and this is something we advise them to do each time they write.

Question Five

In writing, what is the most important component to you?

(You can choose more than one answer)

a- content organization b- vocabulary c- grammar d- punctuation d- spelling

Options	N	%
a	15	60
b	14	56
c	21	84
d	10	40
e	9	36

Table 3.17: Most Important Components in Writing

Table 3.17 shows that the great majority of students 84% consider that grammar as the most important component in writing. 60% of the students indicated that content organization is most important for them, 56% of them said vocabulary, 40% of the students went for punctuation, and 36% pointed out spelling. From the students' responses to this question, we can classify the writing components according to their importance as follows: 1- Grammar; 2- Content organization; 3- Vocabulary; 4- Punctuation; 5- Spelling.

Question Six

What is the most difficult step in writing according to you?

a- generating ideas

b- writing initial drafts

c- revising

d- editing

Options	N	%
a	16	64
b	08	32
c	/	/
d	01	04
Total	25	100

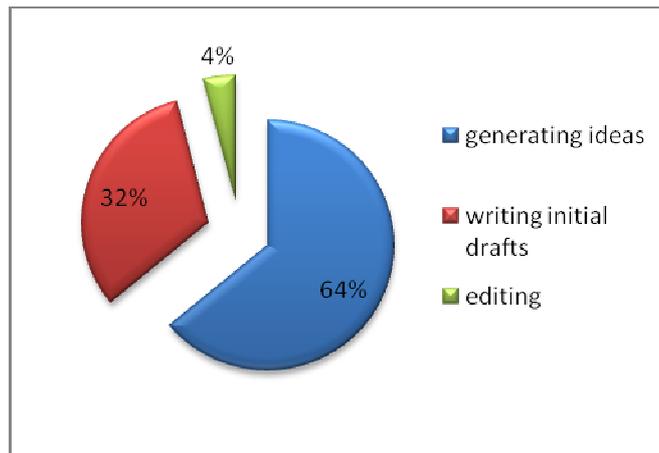


Table 3.18; Figure 3.15: The Most Difficult Step in the Writing Process

From Table 3.18, we see that the majority of students (64%) have difficulties with one of the most important stages in the writing process, generating ideas. 32% of the students said that writing initial drafts is the step in the writing process that gives them most difficulty. Although revising and editing are crucial in the writing process, they do not seem to cause much difficulty.

Question Seven

When you re-read what you have written, do you make changes concerning:

(You can choose more than one answer)

- a- content organization b- vocabulary c- grammar d- punctuation e- spelling

Options	N	%
a	09	36
b	05	20
c	16	64
d	07	28
e	10	40

Table 3.19: Changes Students make when Re-reading

It seems from Table 3.19 that the category which requires the most changes is grammar (64%). The categories of spelling and content organization come next with 40% and 36% respectively. Finally, 28% of the students make changes concerning punctuation and 20% of them concerning vocabulary.

We note that students are more concerned with changes in form, especially grammar rather than content when they read back. This finding is not really encouraging since the adopted approach is the process approach where there is a greater focus on the content rather than the form.

Question Eight

When you write, do you:

- a- Try to make everything perfect from the very beginning
- b- Write with non-stop and then you revise what you have written

Options	N	%
a	04	16
b	21	84
Total	25	100

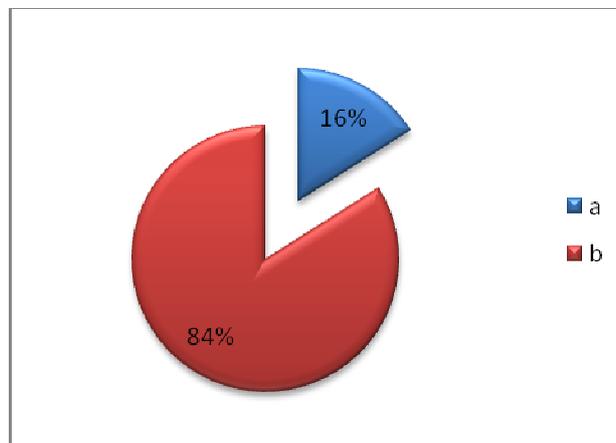


Table 3.20; Figure 3.16: What Students do when they Write?

As shown in table 3.20, only 16% of the students try to make everything perfect from the very beginning, whereas 84% of them think it is important to write with non-stop, and then revise what they have written. Such a finding is important because this is what students are encouraged to do when adopting the process approach which views writing as a recursive activity where writers can move forward and backward.

Section Three: Awareness of the Writing Process

Question Nine

Do you know that writing is a developmental activity that contains different steps?

a- yes

b- no

Options	N	%
a	19	76
b	06	24
Total	25	100

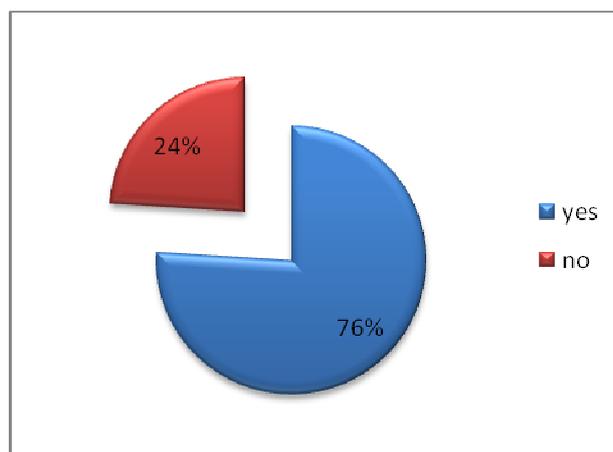


Table 3.21; Figure 3.17: Students Awareness about the Writing Process

Table 3.21 shows that the great majority of the students (76%) know that writing is a developmental process that contains different steps while only 24% do not know this. Even if it is not a big percentage that of those who do not consider writing as a process, teachers

should put more emphasis on this issue since it is very important in writing to develop some awareness of how the process works.

Question Ten

What are the writing stages you are familiar with?

(You can choose more than one answer)

a- prewriting

b- drafting

c- revising

d- editing

Options	N	%
a	18	72
b	21	84
c	11	44
d	06	24

Table 3.22: Students' Familiarity with the Writing Stages

As Table 3.22 shows, drafting is the most familiar stage to students with 84% followed by the prewriting stage with 72%. The revising and the editing stages gained 44% and 24% respectively. It is expected that the drafting stage gains the highest percentage of familiarity to students as known by everybody as the actual act of writing. However, the other stages should not be neglected since they all together contribute to improving the quality of students' writings.

Question Eleven

When writing compositions, do you proceed through all the writing steps?

a- yes

b- no

Options	N	%
a	16	64
b	09	36
Total	25	100

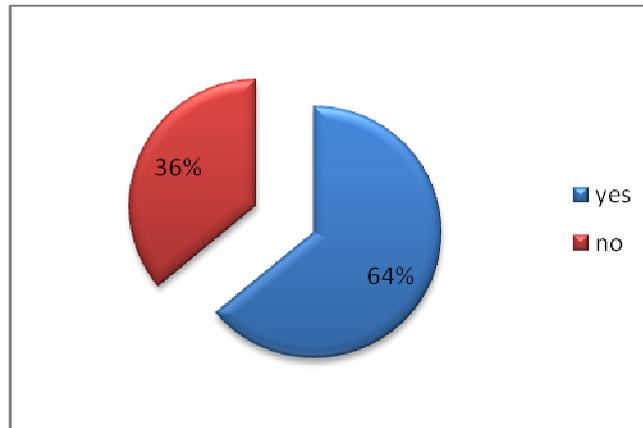


Table 3.23; Figure 3.18: Students' Proceeding through all the Writing Steps

Table 3.23 reveals that the great majority, 64% of the students follow all the writing stages when producing composition, an attitude that is very encouraging because it is very important for students to emphasize the process of writing rather than the product when they write, especially when the process approach is adopted. However, 36% of the students do not follow all the writing steps when producing compositions. Here, and because of the great benefits of following the writing process, we advise teachers to help students stick to all the writing steps when they produce compositions.

Question Twelve

If “No”, please, explain why.

The explanation of the nine (09) students, 36% was that they do not have enough time to go through all the writing steps, and sometimes they combine some stages together in order to save time like prewriting with drafting and revising with editing. They also said that they consider some stages like revising and editing not very important so they drop them.

Question Thirteen

Do you think that following the writing steps will help you produce better compositions?

a- a lot

b- a little

c- not at all

Options	N	%
a	22	88
b	02	08
c	01	04
Total	25	100

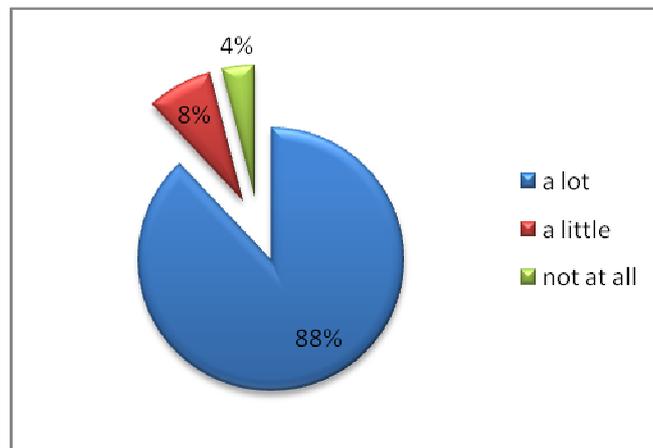


Table 3.24; Figure 3.19: Following the Writing Steps for Better Compositions

From Table 3.24, we see that the majority of students 88% see that following the writing steps will help a lot to produce better compositions. 08% of the students see it will help just a little, and only 04% of them see it will not help at all.

Question Fourteen

Does your teacher ask you to follow the writing steps?

a- yes

b- no

Options	N	%
a	25	100
b	/	/
Total	25	100

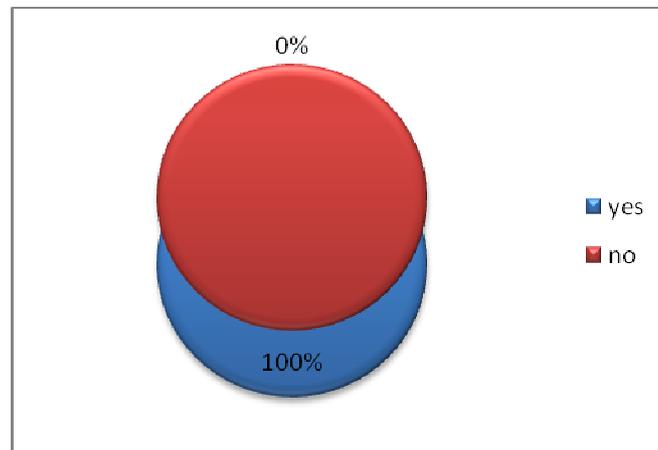


Table 3.25; Figure 3.20: Teachers Asking Students to Follow the Writing Steps

All the students agree that their teachers ask them to follow all the steps while writing. Because proceeding through all the stages of the process is very helpful in improving students' writing, teachers should always encourage students to approach writing in terms of the process that contains several steps.

3.2.4. Discussion of the Results of the Questionnaire

The analysis of the students' questionnaire reveals that students still have the traditional tendency to center their attention on the mechanics of grammar and writing and to neglect content and organization. The section about general information shows that almost all students (96%) find the module of writing interesting. Such a finding is very encouraging, and the teacher has to get students more motivated and interested. This section also demonstrates that the great majority of students (72%) are not satisfied about the time given to the module

of writing because, according to them, it does not provide them with enough practice and sufficient time to write.

When speaking about the writing process, we find that 64% of the students who answered the questionnaire face most difficulty during the drafting stage. This finding is reasonable since drafting is the actual act of writing. However, students can overcome this difficulty if they keep in mind that whatever they write is not the final product; they should consider the first drafts as first attempts that serve for achieving an adequate final product. From the analysis of students' responses about the writing process section, we can see that grammar is the most important component according to them (table 3.17). This result does not support the claim of adopting the process approach which focuses mainly on the expression of meaning and self-discovery; i.e. ideas and content organization.

The analysis of the last section –awareness of the writing process- reveals that the majority of students have some awareness of the writing process; however, they lack the necessary awareness about the importance of the writing stages and the efficiency of multiple drafts in improving their writing. From students' responses, we can see that the majority of them consider prewriting and drafting as major stages while they view revising and editing as minor ones and thus disregard them when they write. Students should be made aware of the importance of each single stage; because all the stages of the process contribute to help students produce a good piece of writing.

Conclusion

The analysis of students' questionnaire reveals that students have a little difficulty in approaching the writing task. It confirms that writing is a challenging and complex skill because students showed that they have difficulties in dealing with the different aspects like grammar, vocabulary, content and ideas organization as well as the other mechanics of

writing, spelling and punctuation. The results of the study also strongly support the importance of the process approach where recursiveness is applied, going through the different stages of prewriting, drafting, revising and finally editing. Furthermore, the results show that students have a little awareness about the writing process, but they lack the necessary awareness about the importance of going through all the writing stages for producing better compositions.

CONCLUSION

General Conclusion

The present study is based on an investigation of the writing skill, the effectiveness of the step-by-step writing within the process-orientation, and the importance of increasing awareness about the process that underlies the writing activity for improving the writing proficiency.

At the beginning of this dissertation, we tried to demonstrate the importance of the writing skill and the relation of this skill with other language skills, namely reading and speaking that serve all in the development of each other. We tried also to identify the main reasons for teaching writing and to present the major aspects that enable the student writer to build up an effective piece of writing. As far as the writing process is concerned, we have stressed the idea of recursiveness and the significance of the different stages that lie beneath the writing process, namely prewriting, drafting, revising and editing. We have also tried to show the importance of awareness in writing stressing the idea that the students should develop some consciousness about the importance of each single stage in the activity of text production. In other words, we tried to prove that all the stages are significant, crucial and helpful in the activity of production and that they are not just a time-consuming sequence of procedures.

It is by the means of two questionnaires devised to both teachers and students that we investigated writing in an EFL context and reached some findings. The findings gathered in this study confirm that writing is a challenging skill and an activity that most of the students find difficulties when dealing with. They have also shown that the adoption of the process approach is effective and can prove the students' level of writing if they are given enough time and the necessary strategies to deal with the writing activity. Moreover, the results of the questionnaire confirm our hypothesis that awareness about the writing process will lead to

better compositions and prove that students lack the necessary awareness about the recursive nature of writing and the importance of proceeding through the different writing stages for more effective writing.

This study attempts to provide the Algerian university teachers and students with an understanding of an effective way that leads to improve writing. Teachers should always urge their learners to follow the writing process and to proceed through the different stages it entails. Learners should know that this progressive activity is not a waste of time but rather a valuable practice that leads to the improvement of their level in writing.

According to what we have seen, we recommend the following:

- 1- The process stages should be taught explicitly and teachers should explain to students how every individual stage contributes in improving the writing outcome.
- 2- The process instructions should be introduced gradually but firmly. First of all, and before getting students to write, teachers should encourage them to think about what they are going to write by planning the content and the sequence of what they will put down on paper. Second, teachers should encourage students to draft and reflect especially the ones who are unused to the writing process. Teachers should get learners to treat first drafts as first attempts and not as finished products. Finally, one way to involve students in revising is to provide them with revision ‘checklists’ to use when looking through what they have written with an intention to make the appropriate modifications.
- 3- The recursive aspect of the writing process should be exercised through essay writing activities which will help learners to develop automaticity in writing by manipulating, organizing and connecting the different stages of the writing activity.

We hope that these recommendations and other researchers' recommendations ameliorate the level of our learners; in this case, we wish our learners become good writers. Moreover, future studies should go deeper and make investigations relative to emotional and affective factors such as motivation and feedback which were not given much importance in this research, but, we believe, have great importance in understanding writing and rearranging the ways of approaching this task.

REFERENCES

References

- Bereiter, C. and Scardamalia, M. (1987).** *The Psychology of Written Composition.* Hillsdale, NJ: L. Erlbaum.
- Brooks, A and C. Penn. (1970).** *Study English: A Course in Written English for Academic and Professional Purposes.* Cambridge University Press.
- Brown, H.D. (1994).** *Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy.* Engle wood Cliffs, N.J, Prentice Hall Regents.
- Brown, K and S. Hood. (1989).** *Writing Matters: Writing Skills and Strategies for Students of English.* UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Byrne, D. (1991).** *Teaching Writing Skills.* Hong Kong: Longman.
- Caudry, T. (1998).** Increasing students' awareness of genre through text transformation exercises: An old classroom activity revisited. *TESL-EJ.*
- Chelsa, E. (2006).** *Write Better Essays in Just 20 Minutes a Day.* New York: Learning Express.
- Chenowith, N.A. (1987).** *The Need to Teach Rewriting.* E.L.T Journal. 41, (pp. 25-9).

- Collins, A and D. Gentner. (1980).** A framework for a cognitive theory of writing. In L.W Gregg and E.R. Steinberg (Eds.) *Cognitive Process in Writing*. Hillsdale, N.J: Erlbaum.
- Crème, P and M.R. Lea. (2008).** *Writing at University a Guide for Students*. UK: McGraw-Hill Education.
- Donmall, B.G. (1985).** Language awareness. *NCLE Reports and Papers*. 6, London: CILT.
- Eisterhold, J. C. (1990).** Reading-writing connections: toward a description for second language learners. In B. Kroll (Ed), *Second Language Writing. Research Insights for the Classroom* (pp. 88-108). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Elbow, P. (1973).** *Writing Without Teachers*. Oxford and New York. Oxford University Press.
- (1981). *Writing with Power: Techniques for Mastering the Writing Process*. New York. Oxford University Press.
- Flower, L. and J. Hayes. (1981).** A cognitive process theory of writing. *College Composition and Communication* , (pp.365-87).
- Galko, F.D. (2002).** *Better Writing Right Now Using Words to Your Advantage* . New York: Learning Express.
- Garvie, E. (1990).** Story as vehicle: teaching English to young children. *Multilingual Matter*. LTD, Clevedon.

Grabe, W. and R.B Kaplen. (1996). *Theory and Practice of Writing. An Applied linguistic Perspective.* Addison Wesley Longman Limited.

Grenville, K. (2001). *Writing from Start to Finish: A Six-Step Guide.* Australia: Griffin Press.

Harmer, J. (1998). *How to Teach English: An Introduction to the Practice of English Language Teaching.* UK: Pearson Education.

————— **(2004).** *How to Teach Writing.* UK: Pearson Education.

Hedge, T. (1988). *Writing.* Oxford University Press.

Hyland, K. (2003). *Second Language Writing.* USA: Cambridge University Press.

Johnson, A. P. (2008). *Teaching Reading and Writing: A Guidebook for Tutoring and Remediating Students.* USA: Rowman & Littlefield Education.

Kane, T. S. (2000). *The Oxford Essential Guide to Writing.* New York: Berkley.

Kroll, B. (1990). *Second Language Writing. Research Insights for the Classroom.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Leki, I. (1992). *Understanding E.S.L Writers. A Guide for Teachers.* London and Portsmouth, N.H: Heineman.

Lindermann, E. (1987). *A Rhetoric for Writing Teachers.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Murray, D.M. (1978). Internal revision: a process of discovery. C.R. Cooper and L. Odell (eds), *Research on Composing: Points of Departure*. (pp. 5-103).

————— (1988). *Read, Write, Revise. A Guide to Academic Writing*. University of Tampa. New York: St. Martin Press.

————— (1992). Writing as a process: how writing finds its own meaning. In T.R. Donovan and B.W. McClelland (eds), *Eight Approaches to Teaching Composition*. (pp. 3-20). National Council of Teachers of English.

Murray, N. and G. Hughes. (2008). *Writing Up Your University Assignments and Research Projects: A Practical Handbook*. UK: McGraw-Hill Education.

Nemouchi, A. (2008). *Writing Connection with Grammar and Literature in the Study Organization of the LMD System*. Unpublished Doctorate Thesis.

Painter, C. (1989). Learning language. A functional view of language development. In R. Hasan and J. Martin (Eds), *Language Development: Learning Language, Learning Culture*. Norwood, N.J. Ablex.

Parson, G. (1985). *Hand in Hand: the Writing Process and the Microcomputer*. Juneau, AK: Alaska State Department of Education.

Perl, S. (1979). The composing process of unskilled college writers. *Research in the teaching of English*. 13.

Raimes, A. (1983). *Techniques in Teaching Writing*. Oxford University Press.

- (1987). Language proficiency, writing ability and composing strategies. *A Study of ESL College Student Writers Language Learning*. 37, (pp. 439-68).
- Read, C. (1978).** Children's awareness of language with emphasis on sound system. In A. Sinclair, R.J. Jorvella and W.J.M. Levelt (eds), *The Child's Conception of Language*. (pp. 65-82). Berlin and New York: Springer Verlag.
- Rivers, W.M. (1968).** *Teaching Foreign Language Skills*. The University of Chicago and London.
- Starkey, L. (2004).** *How To Write Great Essays*. New York: Learning Express.
- Stotsky, S. (1983).** Research on reading/ writing relationship: a synthesis and suggested directions. *Language Arts*. 60, (pp. 627-42).
- Tessema, K. A. (2005).** Stimulating Writing Through Project-Based Tasks. *English Teaching Forum*. 43, (pp23-9).
- Tribble, C. (1996).** *Writing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- White, R.V. (1988).** Process and product. In P. Robinson (Ed.) *Academic Writing*. ELT Document. 129, (pp. 4-16).
- Zemach, E. D and L.A. Rumisek. (2003).** *Academic Writing from Paragraph to Essay*. Oxford: Macmillan Education.

Websites

Association for Language Awareness. (n.d). *ALA Definition*. Retrieved Apr, 30, 2010 from

www.lexically.net/ala/la_defined.htm

Collins, W. (2003). *Writing Defined*. Retrieved March 10 , 2010, from

www.thefreedictionary.com/writing

Ghaith, G. (Feb. 2002). *Approaches to Teaching Writing*. Retrieved Apr, 20, 2010, from

www.nadabs.tripod.com/writing.

Gocsik, K. (Jan. 2007). *Integrating Reading and Writing*. Retrieved Apr, 15, 2010 from

[www. Dartmouth. edu/writing](http://www.Dartmouth.edu/writing).

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 01

The Teachers Questionnaire

Dear Teacher,

You are kindly requested to fill in this questionnaire to express your thoughts about the writing skill, the writing process as well as the importance of awareness in writing.

Please, mark (✓) the appropriate box(es) or give full answer(s) on the broken lines.

May I thank you in advance for your cooperation and the time devoted to answer the questionnaire.

Mr. Mokhtar HAMADOUCHE
Department of Languages
Section of English
Mentouri University
Constantine

Section One: General Information

1. How long have you been teaching English?

.....Year(s)

2. How long have you been teaching the module of “Written Expression”?

.....Year(s)

3. Do you think that three hours a week are enough for “Written Expression”

Yes
No

4. Do you think that the “Written Expression” programme you are teaching is enough to improve your students’ level in writing?

Yes
No

5. If “No”, please, explain why

.....
.....
.....

Section Two: The Process of Writing

6. What is the approach you use to teach writing?

a- The Product Approach
b- The Process Approach
c- Both

7. Please, explain the reasons for choosing this approach

.....

.....

.....

8. What stage of the writing process is most difficult for your students?

- a- Generating ideas
- b- Writing initial drafts
- c- Revising
- d- Editing

9. Do you help your students when they write?

- Yes
- No

10. If “Yes”, do you help them editing: (you can tick more than one box)

- a- Content organization
- b- Vocabulary
- c- Grammar
- d- Punctuation
- e- Spelling

Section Three: Awareness of the Writing Process

11. Do you think that making learners aware of writing as a process is essential in writing?

- Yes
- No

12. How much do you think following the stages within the writing process will help your students to produce better compositions?

a- A lot

b- A little

c- Not at all

13. Do you ask your students to proceed through all the writing steps?

Yes

No

14. Do your students follow all the writing stages?

Yes

No

15. If “No”, please specify the stages your students proceed through (you can tick more than one box)

a- Prewriting (generating ideas, planning, etc).

b- Drafting

c- Revising

d- Editing

Thank you

APPENDIX 02

The Students Questionnaire

Dear Student,

You are kindly requested to fill in this questionnaire to express your attitudes towards the writing skill, the writing process as well as the importance of awareness in writing. Your answers are very important for the validity of the research we are undertaking. As such, we hope that you will give us your full attention and interest.

Please, mark (✓) the appropriate box(es) or give full answer(s) on the broken lines.

May I thank you in advance for your cooperation and the time devoted to answer the questionnaire.

Mr. Mokhtar HAMADOUCHE
Department of Languages
Section of English
Mentouri University
Constantine

Section One: General Information

1. How do you find the module of “Written Expression”?

- a- Very interesting
- b- Interesting
- c- Not really special
- d- Do not know

2. Do you think that three hours a week are enough for “Written Expression”?

- Yes
- No

3. If “No”, Please, explain why

.....

.....

.....

Section Two: The Process of Writing

4. After reading the topic you are supposed to write about, what do you do?

- a- Start immediately to write
- b- Take a moment and think about which ideas to include
- c- Make an outline and follow it
- d- Write down your ideas into sentences or phrases

5. In writing, what is the most important component according to you?

(you can choose more than one answer)

- d- Content organization
- e- Vocabulary
- f- Grammar
- g- Punctuation
- h- Spelling

6. What is the most difficult step in writing according to you?

- e- Generating ideas
- f- Writing initial drafts
- g- Revising
- h- Editing

7. When you re-read what you have written, do you make changes concerning:

(you can choose more than one answer)

- a- Content organization
- b- Vocabulary
- c- Grammar
- d- Punctuation
- e- Spelling

8. When you write, do you:

- a- Try to make everything perfect from the very beginning
- b- Write with non-stop and then you revise and improve your writing

Section Three: Awareness of the Writing Process

9. Do you know that writing is a developmental activity that contains different steps?

- Yes
- No

10. What are the writing stages you are familiar with? (you can choose more than one answer)

e- Prewriting (generating ideas, planning, etc).

f- Drafting (writing)

g- Revising

h- Editing

11. When writing compositions, do you proceed through all the writing steps?

Yes

No

12. If “No”, please, explain why

.....
.....
.....

13. Do you think that following the writing steps will help you produce better compositions?

a- A lot

b- A little

c- Not at all

14. Does your teacher ask you to follow the writing steps?

Yes

No

Thank you

Résumé

L'expression écrite d'une langue étrangère est parmi les pratiques les plus compliquées pour les étudiants des langues étrangères. L'écriture est la plus difficile des talents de la langue, parce qu'elle demande beaucoup d'efforts et de pratique de la part des étudiants pour atteindre un niveau acceptable. En effet, la plupart des étudiants affrontent des difficultés pour produire un essai en bonne et due forme.

Ce travail de recherche vise à approfondir la conscience des étudiants pour leurs permettre de développer des talents dans le domaine de l'écrit, et cela nécessite la prise en considération de plusieurs étapes inhérentes à l'approche procédurale. L'expression écrite n'est pas un produit final qui requiert seulement l'utilisation correcte de la grammaire et du vocabulaire. Les étudiants peuvent améliorer leur niveau d'écriture en suivant méticuleusement toutes les stratégies et les étapes requises par l'approche procédurale.

Pour tester l'hypothèse de ce travail de recherche, nous avons conçu deux questionnaires : l'un pour les enseignants et l'autre pour les étudiants de deuxième année langue Anglaise au sein de l'institut des langues étrangères à l'université Mentouri – Constantine. Après avoir analysé ces deux questionnaires, nous avons obtenu des résultats qui confirment notre hypothèse. Par conséquent, les enseignants peuvent promouvoir la capacité de l'écriture de leurs étudiants en les aidant à comprendre mieux l'approche procédurale et ses étapes essentielles pour une production écrite correcte et effective.

ملخص البحث

إن التعبير الكتابي باستعمال لغة أجنبية من بين أهم النشاطات وأكثرها تعقيدا وأشدّها تحديا لطلبة اللغات الأجنبية. كما تعد الكتابة من بين أصعب المهارات التي تتطلب مجهودا معتبرا و ممارسة متواصلة من طرف الطالب لكي يبلغ مستوى مقبولا في الكتابة. و نظرا لصعوبة التحكم في هذه المهارة فإن كثيرا من الطلبة يواجهون متاعب في إنشاء مقال مضبوط وصحيح و مفهوم.

يهدف هذا البحث إلى زيادة وعي الطلبة بأن تطوير مهارة الكتابة يتضمن النظر إلى هاته الأخيرة كعملية تستلزم عدة مراحل و ليس فقط كنتيجة تتطلب صحة النحو و الصرف و قوة المفردات. يجب على الطلبة أن يكتسبوا الوعي الكافي بأهمية عملية الكتابة عن طريق الممارسة المكثفة التي تؤدي بهم فيما بعد إلى تطوير مجموعة من الاستراتيجيات التي تسمح لهم بأن يقرروا ماذا يكتبون، كيف يكتبونه و كيف يقيمون ماذا يكتبون. لهذا فإننا نعتقد أنه إذا جعلنا الطلبة واعين بعملية الكتابة و المراحل المختلفة التي تنضوي تحت هذه العملية، فإنهم سيجتازون العقبات التي يواجهونها و بذلك يتوصلون إلى كتابة مضبوطة و مفهومة.

للتحقق من صحة فرضيتنا قمنا بتوجيه استبيانين أحدهما للأساتذة، و الآخر لطلبة السنة الثانية من دائرة اللغة الانجليزية قسم اللغات الأجنبية بجامعة منتوري – قسنطينة. بعد تحليل الاستبيانين تحليلا وافيا، توصلنا إلى نتائج تخدم الفرضية التي انطلقنا منها، و تتلخص في أن الطالب يمكنه أن يتفادى المشاكل التي تواجهه عندما يكتب إذا نمينا لديه وعيا كافيا بأهمية عملية الكتابة بمختلف مراحلها.